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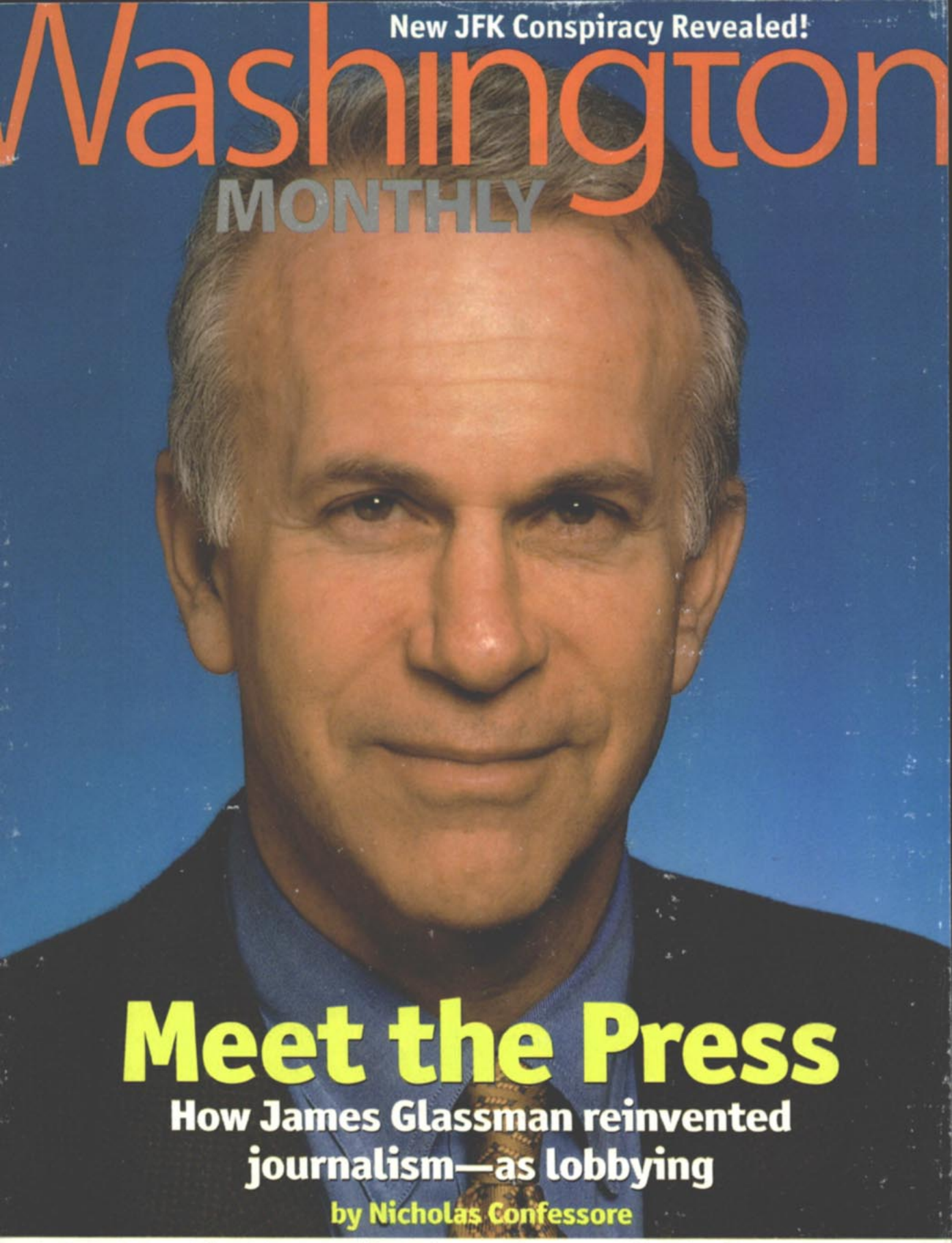
Washington MONTHLY



Meet the Press

How James Glassman reinvented journalism—as lobbying

by Nicholas Confessore

ecember 2003 $4.50

The Neocons' favorite crackpot • Why the Terminator is no Gipper • Jon Meacham on Cheney's bedtime reading

Reviews of books by Robert Rubin and James Carville

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Washington MONTHLY

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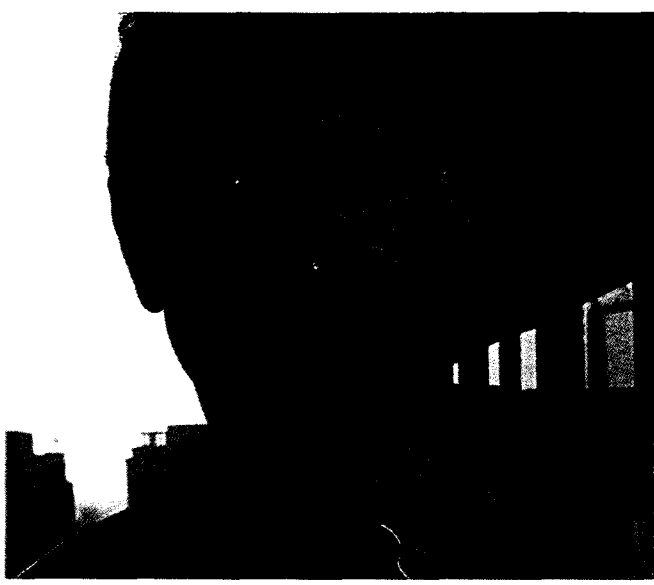

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Letters

To object and serve

As a soldier, reading Robert Poe's, "Prisoner's Dilemma" (October) made a profound personal impact. A young officer on active duty at the beginning of 2003, I knew that the impending war in Iraq was both unjust and immoral. I felt strongly enough about the issue that I considered refusing to deploy and facing a punishment similar to Poe's.

In the end, I decided that I had a responsibility to serve my country, honor my oath, and follow the orders of the lawfully elected civil authorities, despite my personal objections. My situation was vastly different from Poe's. I had volunteered to serve my country, naively thinking that the orders that I would be asked to carry out would be both just and legal. I feel now that I made the right moral and ethical decision by honoring my oath, despite my distaste for serving in what I consider to be a foolish, immoral mistake; but part of me still worries that I might have simply been a coward choosing the path of least resistance. Safe at home in my bed, it is not the gore and violence of war that give me pause, but the fear that I may have been a moral coward.

Going to war presents a challenge to physical courage that friends, family, countrymen, and future employers will admire and honor. But doing the right thing, despite the disdain of Americans who don't harbor the deep and abiding patriotism that I like to think I share with men like Poe, might have asked more of my character than I had to offer. I salute Poe for his surpassing love of country and his amazing courage.

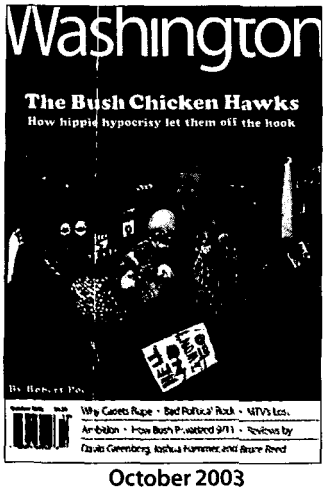
U.S. Army Captain
(Name withheld upon request)
U.S. Army, Third Infantry Division

Please convey to Robert Poe my respect for a great article. I served in the 75th Ranger Regiment for several years, and I am disgusted by the ability of our political leadership to make choices that result in the deaths of young men and women in our military, without having to be accountable for those deaths.

The near absence of the sons and daughters of our leaders in the military allows them to avoid the true test of a justified war — is the cause worth losing my son and daughter for? People like Gen. George Marshall, who actually lost a stepson in World War II, would no doubt have a few words for men like Cheney and Bush.

Thanks for the fantastic article, and keep producing material that refuses to be average.

Seth Campbell
Wellington, NZ



October 2003

"The near absence of the sons and daughters of our leaders in the military allows them to avoid the true test of a justified war—is the cause worth losing my child for?"
—Seth Campbell

Patient suffering

The article by Stephanie Mencimer, "Malpractice Makes Perfect" (October) is exceptionally well written and insightful. Thank you for having the courage to print the truth. Patients' lives depend upon efforts by reporters like you.

Many states, including my home state of Florida, were inundated this year with identical bogus propaganda about a crisis in health-care access, courtesy of organized medical interest groups such as the AMA, FMA, and AHA. Interestingly enough, the 2003 Florida Senate Judiciary Committee actually put these Florida doctors and hospitals and insurance representatives under oath in order to ferret out truth from fiction. The results of this sworn testimony revealed that Florida (like West Virginia) indeed has had no increase in jury payouts, no problem with doctors leaving the state, and no problem with doctors closing their practices as purported by organized medicine. Unfortunately, the Florida legislature in concert with pressure from Gov. Jeb Bush, nonetheless passed a bill to cap patients' pain and suffering jury awards to ostensibly bring down doctors' medical malpractice premiums and remove access to care problems.

Patti O'Regan, LMHC, ARNP, NP-C
Board Certified Nurse Practitioner
Port Richey, Fla.

This was an excellent article by Stephanie Mencimer! Having worked for two hospitals over the past 20 years, I have seen too many physicians' unfortunate mistakes.

I have *never* thought that we should limit the amount of money a victim of medical malpractice could sue for. After reading the article, I believe that the physicians responsible for such mistakes should in fact be singled out for higher premiums. We should have the same policy for medical screw-ups that they have in California for drug busts:

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the "one, two, three strikes, and you're *out*!" law. And by "out," I mean *no* license ever again.
Cheryl O'Leary
Via email

Stephanie Mencimer's article is based solely on the bogus claims of trial lawyers. The truth is, America's medical liability crisis is growing — patients are losing access to care, and we need reasonable liability reforms like those working in California for more than 25 years.

Held up to the light of day, it's easy to see through Mencimer's arguments. One of her more egregious claims is that stock market losses are the cause of rising liability insurance premiums. The GAO debunked this trial-lawyer smokescreen earlier this year — making it clear that bonds make up 80 percent of insurers' investments and that "no medical malpractice insurers experienced a net loss on their investment portfolios" in recent years. The same GAO report identified increasing lawsuit awards as the main driver of medical liability premiums. The root of this crisis has been identified time and again — escalating jury awards, settlements, and the high cost of defending against lawsuits, which drive liability premium increases, with devastating results for patients.

To address this crisis, the AMA supports proven medical liability reforms, including a cap on non-economic damages to stabilize premiums and maintain patient access to care. These reforms have been a proven success in California with striking data to show it. An obstetrician in Los Angeles pays about $69,000 a year for insurance. That same obstetrician would pay $249,000 for liability insurance in Miami, Fla.

We must stem the tide of this crisis by enacting meaningful reforms. Our hearts go out to patients harmed by negligence, and the AMA has always held that these patients should be compensated fairly. Unfortunately, the current liability system has failed patients. Our system has evolved into a "lawsuit lottery," where select patients and their lawyers get astronomical awards, and many patients suffer access-to-care problems because of it.
Donald J. Palmisano, M.D., J.D.
AMA President

Left out

In his article "In God's Country" (October), Max Blumenthal asserts that the Institute on Religion and Public Policy is a conservative think tank because of the political views of a select group of its board members, including Reverend Schenck and Sen. Rick Santorum. Allow me to state for the record that, as a nonpartisan, interreligious NGO, the institute is neither conservative nor liberal. Blumenthal seemingly overlooked the institute's association with Reps. Anna Eshoo and Jesse Jackson Jr., as well as Reverend Lawrence Carter. Furthermore, the institute is not involved, despite Blumenthal's implication, in work on the question of abortion or marriage rights.
Joseph K. Grieboski
President, Institute on Religion and Public Policy

Albright not alright

Contrary to the reviewer, one alleged victory does not compensate for the many defeats suffered by the United States during Madeleine Albright's term in the State Department. The one victory, the ousting of Milosevic, although needed, may come back to haunt us as it simultaneously established a continuing problem in accrediting the brutality of the Kosovo Liberation Army in that tinderbox area of the world.

However, as far as the additional actions of the State Department during that period, when the United States was in a position to determine the future course of events by its world position, we failed miserably. Whether it was in North Korea, Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Libya, or Sudan, we failed to make the commitment to oppose terror both militarily and diplomatically, bringing on the present crises in all of these regions. Our handholding of such unsavory characters as Hafez al-Assad, Qaddafi, and Arafat have brought the Bush administration a series of almost insuperable problems starting with 9/11. Albright may have brilliantly presented her picture of her tenure as a triumph, but the present problems in diplomacy both in the Middle East and in the United Nations argue otherwise.
Nelson Marans
Silver Spring, Md.

Count down

The "Know Not, Ask Not" item from Charles Peters's column "Tilting At Windmills" (October) mentions a story by Vernon Loeb of *The Washington Post* concerning Americans wounded in Iraq. He states that as of Sept. 2, the number was 1,124. Back in August, I wrote to my representative and senators requesting these numbers.

One senator sent me a printout of a Web page prepared by Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports which gave the number 1,148 as of Sept. 12. Seems that Loeb is using this same source, but I sure wouldn't depend on those numbers.

Bill Berkowitz had an article (originally appeared at workingforchange.com) in the Oct. 15 issue of *The Progressive Populist* which covered this same thing. He quoted Lt. Col. Allen DeLane, the man in charge of airlifting the wounded into Andrews Air Force Base, as saying during

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an NPR interview, "Since the war started, I can't give you an exact number because that's classified information, but I can say to you over 4,000 have stayed here at Andrews. And that number doubles when you count the people that come here to Andrews, and then we send them to other places like Walter Reed and Bethesda..." That's more than 8,000 without considering those still in hospitals at our overseas bases, such as Germany, and at a time when the government-published figures were 827. That tells me that this administration is reporting only about one-tenth of actual wounded.

Have you noticed that the total number of those killed in action is decreasing? A little more than a month ago, the number killed was well over 160 since May 1. An Oct. 20 AP news item reporting on two Americans killed in ambushes in Iraq stated, "The deaths in Kirkuk brought to 103 the number of Americans killed by hostile fire since President Bush declared an end to major combat on May 1. A total of 338 Americans have died since the March 20 invasion of Iraq, 217 of them in combat." If you do the math, 217 minus 103 means that 114 were killed between March 19 and May 1, and we know the number was greater than that. Also, we've been losing troops at an average rate at least one a day since May 1, and it's been more than 170 days since May 1—how could the total possibly be 103? If the administration is saying total killed in combat is 217, perhaps we should multiply by 10 (the wounded) to get a closer approximation of the total number of deaths. The lies seem to continue.

Patricia M. Koster
Williston, Fla.

Vets' preference

As Charles Peters noted in "Tilting at Windmills," people with past military service are rare not only among the members of Congress but also among their family members. But there may be a cure—institute a veterans preference system (the type we vets used to get civil-service jobs after World War II) for high elected and appointive offices. A veterans' preference of, say, 7 percentage points in congressional elections would do wonders for our enlistment figures, and it would forestall such scandalous situations as last year's ejection of disabled veteran Max Cleland from the Senate or the lack of military experience among White House officials who so cavalierly sent our troops to overseas wars. Of course, no preference would be given to those who served in draft-dodging outfits such as the Texas Air National Guard.

William M. Burke
Via email

Vouch for it

In "Pro Choice" (September), Siobhan Gorman lays out an "accountable vouchers" proposal. Gorman's idea calls for non-public schools that get public dollars to be held to the same standards as public schools for admissions, testing, non-discrimination, performance, and other basic forms of public transparency. This argument suggests that you can fix vouchers by making them accountable. You can't for several reasons. First, there is no evidence that vouchers raise achievement. And in the real world where voucher programs are conceived and enacted, their supporters are almost wholly and adamantly opposed to accountability to the public who would foot the bill.

For any number of reasons, it's hard to see Gorman's proposal gaining traction. Voucher opponents, like the AFT, object to vouchers on numerous grounds—not the least of which are their consistently poor performance in improving student achievement and their pervasive lack of accountability. Voucher enthusiasts insist on public dollars without strings attached. So, while I agree to Gorman's premise that public funds should come with public accountability, I know from experience that there is a great divide between what voucher supporters should do and what they will do.

Only one of the many publicly and privately funded school voucher programs now operating requires participating schools to administer the same tests as public schools, and no voucher program is required to make test results for all its students available to the public. And that's just how most voucher proponents want it. The pro-voucher American Legislative Exchange Council, for example, has a document titled: "What Makes for Good School Choice Legislation?" Number one on that list is "autonomy for private schools."

From private schools to 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, that is the prevailing sentiment. A survey of private and religious schools by the U.S. Department of Education indicated that these schools would be unlikely to participate in a voucher program that would require them to meet accountability standards in areas such as admissions, academic standards, student testing, and achievement outcomes. Supporters of a school voucher program for the District of Columbia resisted accountability requirements for participating schools. Incredibly, a member of the Senate—who supported accountability—quoted a Bush administration official in the Congressional Record as saying that the Washington, D.C., students eligible for vouchers would be "some of the toughest kids" to educate and that holding them to the same standards as students in D.C. public schools would "set [students receiving

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vouchers] up for failure."

The freedom from accountability that voucher advocates have so far achieved has not resulted in increased achievement. No voucher program — here or abroad, privately or publicly funded — has produced achievement superior to that of comparable students in public schools. And many have produced far worse results. Even voucher proponents no longer assert that students receiving vouchers will outperform public school students, because past claims to that effect have been decimated.

Yet poor performance in voucher schools doesn't mean public funds will be pulled. Nor does malfeasance or even criminal activity. Investigative reporters in Florida (not the Florida Department of Education) have uncovered millions of dollars of fraud, waste, and mismanagement in schools currently receiving taxpayer-funded vouchers (on top of the estimated $56 million the program will cost this year). And *The Washington Post* recently reported that Wisconsin education officials said they had "little control" over schools participating in the Milwaukee voucher program, even when serious troubles arise.

Gorman advises Democrats that backing a proposal like "accountable vouchers" would position them more favorably on education than Republicans. That claim is simply not supportable. Elected leaders are entrusted with the responsibility to strengthen public schools so that all children have access to a high quality education. Their energy would be best spent calling for the widespread adoption of programs with superior records of success — early childhood education, smaller class size, proven academic programs, and higher standards for teachers, to name the essentials. In the end, education policy ought not rest on who looks better or worse, but on what works.

Sandra Feldman
President, The American Federation of Teachers
Washington, DC

Siobhan Gorman replies: So much of what Ms. Feldman writes supports the argument for accountable vouchers that one might think deep down she agrees with me. She concurs with my basic argument that public funds should come with accountability. She also points out that no private school participating in a voucher program currently makes its test results public, which makes it difficult for parents who transfer their kids there to know if, in fact, they're getting a better education there than in public schools. She does not dispute that vouchers are on the rise, which is one reason I give that Democrats should promote their own superior brand of vouchers or risk losing the education issue entirely. She and I agree that vouchers aren't a cure-all for the public schools' ailments, but like Ms. Feldman, I have been unable to unearth any real evidence that vouchers hurt student achievement, either. Most of all, she emphatically agrees that an accountable voucher proposal would meet with great resistance from conservative voucher proponents, which of course highlights the political beauty of the proposal. If Democrats come out in support of accountable vouchers, they will not only be advocating a better policy than Bush's, but one that forces the president, in an election year, to choose between the free-market voucher purists in his base and his own stated principle — popular with moderate and swing voters — that schools ought to be held accountable for results. Shall I consider it an endorsement?

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Tilting at **Windmills**

by **Charles Peters**, founding editor

Above it all

Howard Dean's "guys with confederate flags on their pickups" is the latest in the long series of similar statements by liberal Democrats that demonstrate their desire to be superior. Dean was right in wanting to reach out to the guys, but wrong to characterize them in a way that John Edwards correctly described as "condescending." I believe this desire to be above other people took political root in the Adlai Stevenson era.

Too many liberals were for Stevenson not because he had proved he had more talent for governing than Eisenhower but because he was more intellectually sophisticated, and they were proving that they were too. From there we went on to "cops are pigs," "let those hillbillies go get shot," and "I loathe the military," and we were off and running.

The increasing prosperity of the educated elite has removed them further from the concerns of the average man, as have their failure to serve in the military, their growing tendency to send their children to private schools, and, above all, their disdain for religion.

Speechless

The scene: a House Select Intelligence Committee hearing. The date: November 5, 2003. The witnesses: officials from the CIA and other national security agencies. The questioner: Rep. Rush Holt. The question: [after describing several examples of the military and intelligence agencies' "too-few-translators" problem, including the Special Forces hunting Osama bin Laden without knowing the local language] "Is anything being done to increase the pool of language speakers from which the military and intelligence agencies can recruit?" The answer: Not a single witness could name anything that is currently being done to increase the pool.

Admiring Cher

I never thought of myself as a fan of Cher's, but I am one now. A few weeks ago, she called C-SPAN's "Washington Journal" to describe the wounded soldiers, including a boy about 19 or 20 who had lost both arms, that she had seen while visiting the Walter Reed Army Medical Center. She criticized the news media for not giving enough coverage to the wounded. She also asked "why are none of Cheney, Wolfowitz, Bremer, the President – why aren't they taking pictures with all these guys? Because I don't understand why are these guys so hidden and why there aren't pictures of them."

Coverage of the wounded has gotten a bit better since its total absence was noted here in our September issue. Not only did *The Washington Post* do a major story, noted here in October, so have *The Wall Street Journal* and *Time*. And *The New York Times*' Elisabeth Bumiller has wondered why Bush doesn't visit the wounded. (Of course, this front-page story probably will mean that Bush will pay the wounded a visit before this magazine appears. But that will not alter the fact that he went more than half a year without doing so.)

Time's Nov. 10 article by Mark Thompson reported that 1,513 had been wounded seriously enough to be flown back to this country, adding: "The most seriously wounded are flown to Andrews Air Force Base outside Washington, usually on night-time flights." Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) observes, "The wounded are brought back at midnight, making sure the press does not see." (See the interesting letter by Patricia Koster on p. 3).

"People in the United States do not appreciate what's going on here," Col. Doug Liening, commander of the 21st Combat Support Hospital in Iraq, tells *The Wall Street Journal*'s Yaroslav Trofimov. "It's like a horror movie," adds Capt. Nancy Emma, "I worked in a trauma unit [in the U.S.], I saw death in the face – but nothing like here. And those who live, you've got to wonder how they're going to make it back in the States."

Drugless medics

The latest example of ineptitude in the District of Columbia government comes from its Emergency Medical Services. Here the good news is, starting about a year ago, personnel have been trained in administering emergency medications to the patients they treat. The bad news is that none of these drugs, not even aspirin, is available on the ambulances or the fire trucks that answer emergency calls in the district. When one contemplates the vast sums the district wastes on excessive salaries for its many public officials of dubious talent, it seems especially outrageous that clear necessities like these medications are not provided.

Tear down that wall

"For the first time in almost four years, Israeli and Palestinian forces exchanged gunfire on the West Bank today as a wave of violent protest swept through the

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Palestinian territory." This was the lead of a report from Jerusalem dated May 15, 2000, that appeared in the next day's *New York Times*.

That long period of calm should remind us that, in the wake of the hope inspired by the Oslo peace agreement and that famous White House handshake between Rabin and Arafat, the Palestinians were relatively well behaved. That good behavior only began to break down when they failed to see progress made toward implementing the peace agreement, and in fact saw Israeli settlements on the West Bank continue to grow.

If the Israelis really want peace, they should remember the lesson of this story, which is that they must give the Palestinians hope. Building the fence is not going to do that. According to the AP, it "would encircle tens of thousands of Palestinians, cutting them off from the rest of the West Bank ... The fence's snaking path ... cuts deep into the West Bank ... [and] would cut off Palestinians from the Jordan valley." The fence, by the way, is not the only barrier Israel has erected to separate the Palestinians from one another. It has built highways connecting its settlements and the settlements to Israel that cut through the West Bank and mostly cannot be used by the Palestinians.

New cola war

I was delighted by a recent *Wall Street Journal* article describing how Coca-Cola's domination of the Latin American market is being threatened by the indigenous Kola Real. The secret of the new product's success is its low cost, barely more than half that of Coke. I am reminded of how Pepsi seized a big chunk of the cola market in the 1930s by offering 12 ounces for the same price as Coke's six, and selling it with a jingle that went "twice as much for a nickel too, Pepsi-Cola is the drink for you."

Operator ... operator

You may recall the cover of our May, 2001, issue that showed a chaotic chart reflecting the almost total disorganization of the various agencies that were supposed to respond to a terrorist attack. Then came 9/11, and we were subsequently told immense strides were being made in improving that sorry situation. In May of this year, the government tested the improvements in mock terrorist attacks on Seattle and Chicago that involved some 8,000 emergency workers, federal agents, and scientists. Of course, writes *The Wall Street Journal*'s Robert Block, "officials expected some gaps." But it turned out that the gaps, revealed by a recent report from FEMA, were "more like craters."

Among other problems identified by the report, there was "uncertainty over the chain of command," the same problem our chart had revealed two years earlier; "medical emergency forces couldn't get vital equipment" because no one knew who was supposed to provide it; and "federal agents did not pass on vital intelligence because intended recipients didn't have security clearances or secure telephone lines."

All in all, things sound pretty grim. But one does have to ask if the attack has already happened, should we worry about whether the phone lines are secure?

Bubba v. Dubya

Alan Ehrenhalt, the executive editor of *Governing* magazine, appeared recently at an AEI forum. AEI, as you probably know, has long been a home to conservative intellectuals. Ehrenhalt asked the audience, which appeared to be about 60 people, how many believed that Bush could have defeated Clinton in 2000. Only two hands were raised. No, they weren't Tipper and Al.

Yanks v. Hajjis

"We hate the hajjis, and they hate us," an American soldier home on leave from Iraq tells Jennifer Harper of *The Washington Times*. "Hajji," Harper explains, "is slang among the soldiers referring to the "hajj," a devout pilgrimage to Mecca. The term is offensive to Muslims, no doubt. That's why it's part of the GI vernacular." Doesn't

THE FBI TAKES ON THE WHITE HOUSE

"FBI agents have conducted the first round of questioning at the White House, talking to senior officials who may have disclosed the identity of Valerie Plame," report Bill Gertz and Rowan Scarborough of *The Washington Times*. The agents, however, did not take sworn statements. Why didn't they? Because, write Gertz and Scarborough, "lying to an FBI agent during questioning is a crime." So, Karl Rove and all his co-conspirators were free to lie without fear of any consequences. Hmm.

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that remind you of our soldiers' referring to the Vietnamese as gooks? The terrible problem in both cases is that some of the people whose hearts and minds we need to win are shooting at our soldiers, and that does not inspire tender feelings on the part of those being shot at, which in turn makes them behave badly not only to the people that are actually shooting but also to everyone who looks like them, including those who might otherwise be sympathetic to our side. Instead of making friends, we make enemies, albeit for the most understandable reasons.

Incredible growing bureaucracy

The Bush administration has been busily "outsourcing" government work, giving private contractors jobs that had previously been performed by federal agencies. It has been difficult, however, to get a handle on the dimensions of the transfer. But recently two reports, both of which I learned about from *The Washington Post*'s Stephen Barr, have shed some light on the matter.

One study, by Stephen Fuller, of George Mason University, finds: "Federal procurement contract awards to firms located in the Washington area and doing this contract work locally accounted for 43 percent of all federal spending in the area, while federal salaries and wages accounted for 29 percent. Two decades ago, the percentages were approximately reversed."

The other study, by Paul Light for Brookings, found that 50,000 civil service jobs disappeared in the period 1999-2002 while the "true size" of government, counting work financed by government contracts and awards, grew by 1.1 million jobs.

Labor pains

In the June 2001 issue of this magazine, Matthew Miller described how the teachers' unions had sabotaged reform of the public schools in Los Angeles and Philadelphia. Now comes *Time*'s Joe Klein, with a story headlined "How the Teachers Killed a Dream."

If George W. Bush is such a passionate believer in democracy for the Mideast, why does he refuse to talk to the one democratically elected Arab leader, Yasser Arafat? Certainly Arafat can be a pill, but unfortunately democracies do not always make the ideal choice, as Bush's own election proves.

Bob Thompson, the Michigan road-builder who became well known for distributing $128 million of his fortune to his employees, recently offered the Detroit public schools $200 million to establish 15 small, 500-student charter public high schools in the inner city. The plan was based on the success of a similar middle school in Detroit and reflected compelling research showing that small schools are more effective. It was endorsed by the city's mayor, Kwame Kilpatrick, and the state's governor, Jennifer Granholm. But the union called a work stoppage that closed the city's schools. Although the proposal did not oppose unions, or rule out their involvement, the Detroit union was disturbed that the middle school had been non-union. Its opposition killed the plan.

"The teachers' union was once a progressive force, but that day has passed," Mayor Kilpatrick tells Klein. "And it's not coming back until the union realizes that we're going to have to make dramatic changes to improve education here."

Profit motive

One of the nice reforms of the Clinton era was to permit students to borrow directly from the federal government, giving them an alternative to private lenders and providing a competitive yardstick, much like the TVA did for private utilities. Because this competition holds interest rates down, direct loans are good for the student. They are also good for the taxpayer, giving the government a 22-cent profit for every $100 borrowed. On private loans, which by the way are subsidized by the taxpayer, the government loses $12.50 for each $100.

Since the government guarantees repayment of the private loans, they are a neat deal for the private lenders. Naturally, they have a deep distaste for the direct loan program. They want all the business for themselves. So they are, reports *US News & World Report*, bribing universities with rakeoffs and other incentives to require students to get private loans. The result is that 62 colleges and universities have dropped the direct loan program and more are planning to do so. The magazine says "the development is costing the US treasury as much as $250 million a year."

Has anyone tried to do anything about this outrage? The answer is yes, and his name is John Edwards, senator and presidential candidate. He wants to end the government subsidy for private loans and make all loans direct, which seems to us the sensible thing to do. The big opposition to Edwards is coming from Sallie Mae, the 800-pound gorilla of the private student loan business, and the Department of Education, which Bush has

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packed with former executives and lobbyists from the private loan industry. Perhaps he really meant Leave No Lobbyist Behind.

Iraq's silent disabled

In addition to the wounded, 9,341 more members of the American military have been flown home from Iraq for "other health reasons," according to *Time*'s Mark Thompson. Mark Benjamin of United Press International puts the total at 6,861—2,464 for non-combat injuries, and 4,397 for illness. Even Benjamin's lower figures strike me as disturbing, particularly since, as he points out, they don't include service members treated in theater or those whose illnesses, such as post-traumatic stress disorder, were not apparent until after they returned to the United States.

Running in the hills

Relieved, courtesy of the FBI, from fear of implication in the Valerie Plame scandal, Karl Rove is up to his old political tricks. You will recall that he was astute enough to target West Virginia in the 2000 election, reaping his reward in the five votes that gave George W. Bush his victory over Al Gore in the electoral college. Now, a year before the next election, Rove has dispatched an operative to spend the next year in West Virginia making sure that the GOP repeats its previous victory. "The people of West Virginia are very important to us," Republican National Committee spokeswoman Lindsay Taylor tells the *Charleston Daily Mail*'s Karin Fischer. The Democrats have good reason not to like Rove, but they should be willing to learn from him if they don't want to lose again.

Peaceniks v. Likudniks

Not all Israelis support Sharon's provocative policy. "Tens of thousands" recently gathered in Tel Aviv, reports the AP's Jonathan Katz, "to mark the eighth anniversary of the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, showing their continued support for the stalled peace process." AP's Ian James also reports that economic realism argues for peace: "Salaries have fallen 10 percent during the fighting, more than a tenth of the workforce is jobless, tens of thousands of businesses have shut down, and tourism has all but collapsed."

Peaceniks have progressed to the point that, according to Greg Myre of *The New York Times*, "a group of prominent Israelis and Palestinian politicians, working outside official channels, have written a symbolic peace agreement that they hope could be a foundation for future negotiations." The bad news is, Myre also reports, "the right-wing Israeli government immediately denounced the proposal, calling it irresponsible freelance diplomacy."

The fact that the agreement accepts 140 Israeli settlements on the West Bank suggests how far Sharon is from being able to recognize a good deal when he sees it.

Obviously, Bush needs to lean on Sharon and his colleagues. It is time for us to seriously threaten them with the loss of our substantial economic subsidy, without which Israel would have a hard time surviving and, if that doesn't work, to make clear that our continued guarantee of Israel's security depends on its offering a just peace to the Palestinians.

Unfortunately, Bush shows no sign of being willing to apply such pressure. *The Washington Post*'s Glenn Kessler describes the administration's approach: "The pattern is one of engagement and disengagement—a burst of publicity about new initiatives or special envoys, followed by policy drift and an unwillingness to push either side, especially the Israelis, to take big steps toward improvement."

Stand by me

A lack of enthusiasm for the long meetings that are characteristic of government bureaucracies and many other organizations was a strong motive behind my decision to construct a life in which I was my own boss. That way, I didn't have to schedule any meeting that wasn't absolutely necessary, and even then, whenever I got fidgety, I could announce an adjournment.

I realize, however, that not all of you have been lucky enough to similarly arrange your working life. Nevertheless, I have good news for you. You too can do something about those interminable meetings: persuade your boss to move all the chairs out of the conference room. If everyone has to stand, including the boss, the chances are the meeting will move right along, and be concluded well before heads begin to nod in glassy-eyed stupor.

The New York Times credits this marvelous idea to Nick Braden, the director of the United States division of a French company. If you have to have a table at your meeting, Braden suggests that it be the height of a bar so everyone can stand around it. It might even be useful for recreational purposes after hours.

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Paid Advertisement

Open Letter to Hillary Rodham Clinton

As a staunch conservative, I am prepared to discard party interests for national survival.

Our struggle with Islam may very well become another Thirty Years' War.

Choosing you for president would stand Islam on its head.

800 million Moslem women have been degraded to:

Semen receptacles
Brood mares
4th class non-entities.

That a dominant power should have a mere woman as its chief executive officer would open the eyes of 800 million Moslems and shake Islam to its very core.

Go for it, Hillary. Please!

Nicholas Stephen Poluhoff

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10 MILES SQUARE

"...such district (not exceeding ten miles square)...[shall] become the seat of the government of the United States."
—THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES

Baath House

Cleaning out the Iraqi embassy.

By Eric Pfeiffer

A few days before Halloween, I went by the best haunted house in Washington: the Iraqi embassy.

From any serious distance, it looks like any other monumental stone building along Embassy Row, with its brick structuring and gated entrance. But come closer, and you see visible signs of rot: Cords of ivy slither inside open windows, stacks of unopened newspapers have deteriorated into wet pools of gray mush, and weeds, creepily, have overwhelmed the foliage in the front yard and begun to suffocate the sidewalk. There are literally cracks in the foundation.

The embassy was abandoned shortly after U.S. forces entered Iraq in late March. All but one of its employees were ordered out of the country, and it fell under the control of the American government, like Iraq itself. And just like Iraq, the situation at the embassy has been deteriorating ever since.

No lights were on inside the embassy, even though I visited at one in the afternoon. The embassy's entrance was shielded in a breezeway of dark, reflective Plexiglas that obscured any view of the front doors. I stepped inside the darkened walkway and faced a large, wooden door with a thick metal handle. After three knocks had gone without response, I gave the door a light shove. It opened. My memory flashed to a skit from "The Daily Show" last year. Correspondents for the faux news program went on a trick-or-treat escapade through Embassy Row. Approaching the Iraqi embassy, the sky darkened as the soundtrack of a Bela Lugosi-era monster flick filled the background. But what was a parody last year has now become reality.

Faint sounds emanated from inside the 30-room, 9,000-square-foot building, so I called out my most pleasant sounding "Hello?" Several more calls and still no response. I worked my way down a stairway to the building's basement, which was covered with a glass canopy that had a single shattered panel near its center. It was very dark. At the bottom of the stairs, I found a dead bird lying on the floor, head twisted away from its body, the beak pointed toward a thick metal door. A large padlock had been undone, but the room inside was pitch black. At that moment, a stranger's hand gripped my shoulder from behind.

I swung around and stood face to face not with some threatening Lovecraftian menace, but a State

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Department official. She could have won a Karen Hughes-look-alike contest, in her sleek gray business suit, and cropped, gray-streaked hair.

"What are you doing here?" she demanded.

My voice was half friendly, half quavering: "I'm here to speak with Achmed."

Her eyes narrowed. I realized this was the sort of vague thing an al-Qaeda wannabe seeking a contact might say. "Achmed," the first name of the Iraqi embassy staffer I had scheduled to meet, even sounded like a code name. "What's his last name?" she asked, forebodingly.

"Alkaissy." After I showed her my press pass and explained why I was there, she seemed, reluctantly, convinced I wasn't there on business for the Fedayeen.

"And what might you be doing here?" I asked. She smirked and replied: "I'm with the State Department. You'll have to go around to the front and wait for him outside."

Back around front, I found Alkaissy exiting the embassy with another Department employee. He greeted me warmly and exchanged a few parting words with the visiting State employees, who had left behind a crew of maintenance workers unloading equipment to clean up the embassy grounds. Alkaissy led me back inside the building, which was still without power. We walked through the darkness up a short flight of stairs into a large ballroom. Rays of light seeped in through its dust-covered windows, leaving the room partially illuminated, and we sat down. The building was purchased by the Iraqi government in 1961 and has had a turbulent history since. The motto "The name of this chamber is Peace" was once inscribed upon the second-floor fireplace. The inscription disappeared in the early '90s. Literally and, I suppose, also figuratively.

Alkaissy has seen his career and his country's diplomatic connection with the United States threatened twice, after the 1991 Gulf War and this year's overthrow of Saddam Hussein, and managed to outlast both. Dressed in a solid blue t-shirt, jeans, and an Oakland Raiders football cap, he set his pack of Dunhill cigarettes on the coffee table and started smoking immediately. Were I to have casually passed him on the street, I would never have guessed this was the man responsible for trying to revitalize the principal American headquarters of a country with which the United States has spent the last seven months at war.

For the last six months, Alkaissy has been the only contact for Iraqi citizens in the United States, attempting to run the dealings of an embassy that is charged with assisting the more than 300,000 Iraqis currently living in the United States, from the confines of his house in Alexandria. "I couldn't do anything. The Iraqi community started calling me. I don't have authorization from the State Department to do anything. The main thing the Iraqi community wants is passports. I have 630 passports waiting. They can't return to their families and they can't establish themselves here. They are stuck."

The first move towards reestablishing the embassy came in late August when the Iraqi Governing Council's Ahmad Chalabi—then serving as president of the council on a rotating basis—stopped by for a visit. The first thing Chalabi and Alkaissy did was take down the dozens of photos and portraits of Saddam Hussein that hung in each of the embassy's rooms. A pile of the smaller pictures lies face down on a boardroom table in the ballroom. Standing more than four feet high, the largest of the portraits leans against a wall overlooking the room's expanse. "This is one of the newer ones," Alkaissy says, laughing. "They'll probably want it for a museum somewhere."

That was, so far, the only thing Chalabi has done for the embassy, but Alkaissy has faith. "Chalabi is a very nice gentleman. He's very open-minded. He understood our needs. He promised he would do something, and I'm sure he is doing it."

But for the moment, the embassy's real boss, like Iraq's, is the American government, from which it receives occasional orders but with which it has little face-to-face discourse. The State Department has decreed that three Iraqi diplomats will come to the embassy when it reopens; two of the diplomats will come from Iraq's embassies in Algeria and Vietnam, one from Baghdad. But with all Iraq's assets frozen, the embassy building has been gathering dust, cobwebs, and neglect.

The ghosts of Saddam lurk everywhere inside the building. Behind the stack of portraits lies the embassy's library. Achmed leads me to a grand, glass-cased oak bookshelf over 10 feet wide holding hundreds of books with their covers inscribed in Arabic. Every single volume is Baath Party literature. "I'm tired of all this," he says. "No one ever reads these." A clock hanging over a hallway near the main offices is stopped at 11:27 p.m. The last of the expelled officials shut it off as a marker of the moment when they were forced to leave.

We went back outside together. The State Department's maintenance crews were taking saws to the shrubs that just hours ago had shrouded the grounds. It was a fitting moment for departure: At the embassy, as in Iraq, the facelift had begun.

Eric Pfeiffer is a Washington, D.C., writer.

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Monster Truck Rally

The "activists" who defend the SUV.

By Zachary Roth

Over the past few years, sport utility vehicles have been accused of many sins. Environmentalists decry SUVs' pitifully low gas mileage while consumer safety advocates note their disproportionate propensity to kill the drivers of cars with which they collide. Still other critics observe that SUVs are, according to market research, the vehicle of choice for vain, self-centered jerks. But it wasn't until late last year that the SUV actually met its maker. "What Would Jesus Drive?" asked the Evangelical Environmental Network (EEN), a Christian conservationist outfit affiliated with *Creation Care* magazine, in a nationwide ad campaign that received widespread publicity. "Pollution from vehicles has a major impact on human health and the rest of God's creation," noted the group's Web site. "Obeying Jesus in our transportation choices is one of the great Christian obligations and opportunities of the 21st century."

In Washington, as in physics, every action has a reaction. So it came as little surprise when, last July, a new ad appeared in *USA Today*, funded by an outfit known as the Sport Utility Vehicle Owners of America (SUVOA). Critics were asking the wrong question, the ads suggested. The right question was "What Does Jesus Drive?" Jesus, in this case, was Jesús Rivera, a proud father and Vietnam veteran. He was also, the ad informed readers, one of 24 million who rely on their SUVs to "carpool friends and family; tow boats, campers and trailers; haul home improvement supplies; and"—lest SUV owners be accused of selfishness—"volunteer to take people to the hospital in snow emergencies." The new group, reported *The New York Times*, was "a fledgling association of owners of sport utility vehicles ... taking aim at their critics." The group quickly became Pat Buchanan to the EEN's Bill Press, its spokespersons available to provide "balancing" quotes for the growing number of reports about SUVs' poor environmental and safety records.

Last October, I paid a visit to the organization's Washington, D.C., headquarters, hoping to get a glimpse of SUVOA in action. The headquarters turned out to be the offices of Stratacomm, a very successful Beltway public relations firm specializing in issues affecting the auto industry. Sitting in a plush leather chair in Stratacomm's state-of-the-art conference room, Ron DeFore, one of Stratacomm's "principals," explained that SUVOA's "main purpose is to educate, so that people know the truth." DeFore seems most at home when throwing out facts and figures in support of all things SUV. When I called him to set up an interview, he launched, unprovoked, into an explanation of a little-known 1997 study by the National Highway and Traffic Safety Administration which found that making SUVs smaller would do little to improve safety in crashes. The study was "buried" by the Clinton administration, he said.

DeFore and his partner Jason Vines, who works out of Stratacomm's Detroit office, were perfectly positioned to bring SUVOA into the spotlight last summer. Vines, a former vice president for communications at Ford, also oversaw public relations for Andrew Card, now George Bush's chief of staff, back when Card was president of the American Automobile Manufacturers Association. Until last year, DeFore handled communications for the Coalition for Vehicle Choice, a short-lived lobbying group run out of Stratacomm's D.C. office, which was set up by automakers and related interests to fight Congress' attempts to raise federal fuel-economy standards. All three major domestic automakers—Ford Motor Company, General Motors, and DaimlerChrysler—as well as the industry's two trade associations, the Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers and the National Automobile Dealers Association, are current or former Stratacomm clients.

At least one member of the current association, however, entered the debate as an actual SUV owner defending his personal vehicular preferences: Bill Brouse, a 69-year-old retired business executive and SUV owner from Menomonee Falls, Wis., who founded the group to "provide a voice on behalf of the SUV." Brouse started the organization using only his pension money but late last year called Vines to ask for help funding and publicizing his project. It was a good fit—Stratacomm's clients rely on sales of SUVs for a major portion of their profits but, at that point, had been slow to fashion an

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effective response to the continued criticism of their most successful products—and the firm gladly took over Brouse's association. (Brouse remains on board as a "consultant.")

One of Vines's and DeFore's favorite themes—one that dovetails nicely with the group's P.R. narrative of underdog SUV owners battling the powers-that-be—revolves around the anti-SUV "misinformation" and "bias" of the mainstream media. For my benefit, DeFore read aloud the opening paragraph of a page-one story from that day's *USA Today*, which reported that, "A former Miss America probably will not be charged after the SUV she was driving struck and killed a mother of four..." In case I didn't get it, Vines pointed out the gratuitous use, in a negative context, of the word "SUV," instead of a more neutral alternative like "vehicle." DeFore's assistant, who had joined us in the conference room, shook her head ruefully at the injustice of it all.

Vines, however, had more pressing concerns than mere media bias. He blamed mainstream anti-SUV activists for indirectly provoking a spate of recent incidents in which radical protestors set fire to SUV dealerships. "The anti-SUV zealots," said Vines, referring to non-violent activists, "are creating an atmosphere where it's open season on SUV owners." Worse, he argued, they were forcing Americans to drive unsafe cars. DeFore pointed me to statistics that purport to show that SUVs are in fact safer than smaller cars for their drivers. The safest of all possible worlds, he said, would be one in which everyone drove an SUV. "Take all of the people who may not have bought SUVs because of what they heard," he implored. "That's misinformation that costs lives." When asked about SUVs' higher rollover rates, Vines admitted that the big vehicles' higher centers of gravity do make them more likely than smaller cars to flip over, but he stressed that such accidents comprise only a small percentage of overall automobile crashes. He ignored a more important point: that rollovers account for one third of highway deaths.

When I brought up SUVs' contribution to global warming pollution—they burn more gas than smaller cars, and so produce more carbon dioxide—DeFore stopped me in mid-sentence to "correct my nomenclature." Carbon dioxide, he insisted, "is not a pollutant. The EPA says it doesn't meet the criteria. It won't kill you." DeFore assured me he's not here to argue that global warming doesn't exist—it's just that there's not much we can do about it anyway. "We'd have to drain the oceans if we wanted to stop global warming," Vines piped in over the speakerphone. (Oceans actually absorb small amounts of carbon dioxide.) "Plants need carbon dioxide to produce oxygen," DeFore added helpfully.

Anticipating charges that SUVOA is just another "astroturf" organization—a business-backed fake grassroots group, designed to give the illusion of popular support to corporate-friendly positions—Vines and DeFore decreed when they took over that the group would accept no corporate funding, and would ban automakers from being members—though not from advertising on SUVOA's Web site, which bears a prominent picture of a Ford Explorer. When pressed, DeFore admits that some of SUVOA's funding—almost certainly the majority, since Web site advertising doesn't bring in much—comes from Stratacomm's general budget.

But whoever Vines and DeFore represent, there's no doubt they personally identify with the average SUV owner. Asked what they drive to work each day, Vines told me a Chevy Suburban. As for DeFore? "I'm in the market for a Hummer."

Zachary Roth is a *Washington Monthly* intern.

The Washington Monthly's

Monthly Journalism Award

Michael D. Sallah and Mitch Weiss

"Buried Secrets, Buried Truths"
The Toledo Blade
October 21-23, 2003

Sallah and Weiss spent eight months uncovering some of the most frightening events of the Vietnam War to emerge in decades: During a seven month spree in 1967, a vicious, elite American army unit called "Tiger Force," killed more than 80 unarmed Vietnamese civilians, in some cases mutilating and torturing them. In the 1970s, the Army had investigated the incidents and found 18 soldiers had committed atrocities, but declined to charge anyone, Sallah and Weiss discovered. Now, the *Blade*'s investigation has prompted the Pentagon to reopen the case.

The Monthly Journalism Award is presented each month to one or more newspaper, magazine, radio, or television stories (or series of stories) that demonstrate a commitment to the public interest. We are particularly interested in reporting that explains the successes and failures of government agencies at all levels and of other institutions such as the media, corporations, unions, and foundations that contribute to the existence or solution of public problems. Please send nominations (including a copy of the article or broadcast text) to The Washington Monthly Journalism Award, 733 15th Street, NW, Suite 520, Washington, DC 20005. Or email us at editors@washingtonmonthly.com.

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Tournament of Poses

Why Congress wants to pick college bowl winners.

By Brent Kendall

For years, college football fans around the country had complained that, unlike every other major American sport, theirs ended without a decisive championship, and, in some seasons, without a clear-cut champion. The crowning of champions was left to a pair of polls; college football coaches voted in one, journalists who covered the sport in the other. Not infrequently, these two camps disagreed. This vagueness was seen in some quarters as deeply anti-American: At the end of the season, it wasn't always clear who had won the damn thing. So the presidents of the major college football conferences (such as the Big Ten and the Southeastern Conference) and the executives who run the New Year's Day bowl games (the Rose Bowl, the Orange Bowl, etc.) got together and devised a new system, which went into effect in 1998, and is designed to end the season with an undisputed champion. The system is extremely convoluted (like the sport itself), but its basic feature is to mandate that the two teams which end the year in the highest ranked positions play each other in one of the New Year's Day bowls.

But some fans have a big gripe with this system, too. They complain that the Bowl Championship Series (BCS) system, which gives priority to the champions of the "major" conferences in the race for the national championship, unfairly discriminates against the smaller schools—the so called "mid-majors" in Division I-A. So this obscure power struggle between parochial interests got kicked up to the American institution that remains, even with a GOP leadership which had promised to get rid of pork-barrel projects, the undisputed national champion of power struggles between parochial interests: Congress. As it happens, Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) is an alumnus of Brigham Young University, one of the mid-majors with the biggest gripe; his Judiciary Committee speedily set about scheduling hearings.

"Many sports fans in Utah and all across the nation have strong feelings about the BCS," said Hatch, in the fine, grandiloquent rhetorical tradition senators usually employ when speaking about weighty matters of state, like Social Security reform or campaign finance. "First, [they feel that] the current system is unfair. Second, they care deeply that it isn't."

Hatch, a once-promising high-school halfback, argued that the current system disadvantages universities like BYU because the power schools retain most of the $90 million generated by the BCS bowls and because top talent flows to schools that can offer recruits a chance to play for a national title. Life might not be fair, Hatch asserted, but to ignore that unfairness would be to "chip away at the American dream."

As though to excuse the panel's tenuous jurisdiction over college football's post-season—BCS's practices, Hatch and others insisted, raise antitrust concerns—he argued that looking at this attack on the American dream was "worth a couple hours of this committee's time."

If Hatch had a parochial interest in attacking the BCS system, the few other senators in attendance (only four of the committee's 14 members showed up) had similar cause to defend it. Ohio's Republican Sen. Mike DeWine noted that last year, the Ohio State Buckeyes won the national championship by defeating the University of Miami in a game that would not have taken place before the BCS existed. "If we assume the BCS actually does cause harmful effects on competition, we need to balance those effects against the benefits that the BCS brings," said DeWine, adding, "Obviously, I'm a little prejudiced."

The only senator at the hearing who didn't have a direct home-state interest in the BCS debate was Joseph Biden (D-Del.). Biden's alma mater, the University of Delaware, plays in Division I-AA—a lower-tier league of competition for smaller schools that does, in fact, have postseason playoffs. Speaking with a mix of regional pride and the earnestness of one who still thinks congressional hearings are for solving problems, Biden suggested that a system that works for the Delaware Blue Hens could work for the bigger schools as well. "There are a whole lot of us in the East that would much rather see a playoff system," he said, adding, "there's a whole lot of us in the East that don't give a damn about the Rose Bowl."

Hatch got favorable press treatment in the Utah papers the next day. The Washington media were less kind. "I need to hear Orrin Hatch on the Orange Bowl like I need to hear Alec Baldwin on the Brazilian rain forest," said *The Washington Post*'s Norman Chad.

Brent Kendall is a Washington correspondent for the *Los Angeles Daily Journal*.

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WHO'S WHO IN BAGHDAD

By Joshua Micah Marshall, Laura Rozen, and Colin Soloway

Simone Ledeen is serving her country. She is the daughter of **Michael Ledeen**, the Iran-Contra luminary, AEI scholar, and all-around capo in the neocon mafia. She's 29, a freshly-minted M.B.A., with little to no experience in war-torn countries. But as an advisor for northern Iraq at the Ministry of Finance in Baghdad, she is, in essence, helping shape one quarter of that nation's economy.

When the history of the occupation of Iraq is written, there will be many factors to point to when explaining the post-conquest descent into chaos and disorder, from the melting away of Saddam's army to the Pentagon's failure to make adequate plans for the occupation. But historians will also consider the lack of experience and abundant political connections of the hundreds of American bureaucrats sent to Baghdad to run Iraq through the Coalition Provisional Authority.

It's not that Americans lack such experience. In the last decade particularly, many American officials acquired a great deal of expertise in post-conflict reconstruction in places like Bosnia, Kosovo, East Timor and in post-Communist countries in Eastern Europe and around the globe—expertise that could have been put to good use at the CPA. Names frequently mentioned are those of General **Bill Nash**, who commanded troops in the Gulf War and NATO operations in Bosnia; **Robert Perito**, former senior foreign service officer and deputy director of the Justice Department's international police training program, who helped advise peacekeeping missions in Bosnia, East Timor, Kosovo, and helped organize post-conflict police training in Albania, Croatia, and Macedonia; **Bob Gelbard**, former U.S. presidential envoy to the Balkans; and retired Air Force Maj. Gen. **Jacques Klein**, who served in various capacities in the Balkans under the United States and the United Nations. Yet according to experts in the field, few of those with experience in these various deployments got the call to serve or even had their opinions solicited.

In their place, the architects of the war chose card-carrying Republicans—operatives, flacks, policy-wonks and lobbyists—for almost every key assignment in the country. Some marquee examples include U.S. civil administrator **Paul Bremer**'s senior advisor and liaison to Capitol Hill, **Tom Korologos**, one of the most powerful GOP lobbyists on Capitol Hill. Then there's the man in charge of privatizing Iraq's 200-odd state owned companies, **Tom Foley**, a venture capitalist and high-flying GOP fundraiser. Foley was one of the **Bob Dole**'s top-ten career donors, Connecticut finance chair for Bush 2000 and a classmate of the president's from Harvard Business School.

The chief advisor to the Agriculture Ministry is **Dan Amstutz**, a Reagan administration veteran who until recently served as the president of the North American Export Grain Association. Oxfam's Director of Policy **Kevin Watkins** recently quipped that with his record of opening up developing economies to cheap American agricultural exports, "putting Dan Amstutz in charge of agricultural reconstruction in Iraq is like putting **Saddam Hussein** in the chair of a human rights commission." The presence of so many GOP lobbyists and fat-cats on the CPA roster has led many to suspect that the staffing was driven by the desire to award prized contracts to friendly companies and campaign donors. There is more than a little truth in those impressions. But a closer look paints a more complex picture.

In the lead-up to war, the architects of the coming invasion fought endless rearguard battles against their enemies at the State Department and the C.I.A. to keep the major policy decisions firmly in their hands. And the process continued as they began to staff CPA itself, where they wrote off not only State Department employees (considered disloyal because State had resisted the hawks over Iraq strategy) but

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also anyone who worked at NGO's (ideologically suspect) and those who had worked in Clinton's government (ditto).

By making partisan loyalty their primary criteria, the administration ruled out most of the people with experience in the field and restricted themselves to politically trustworthy Republicans, many of whom, though often well-meaning and admirably willing to serve their country in a very dangerous place, had little to no experience to prepare them for the challenges they'd encounter in Iraq.

A typical example is **Dan Senor**. Before attending Harvard Business School from 1999 to 2001, Senor was a staffer for then-Sen. **Spencer Abraham** of Michigan. After receiving his MBA, he went to the **Carlyle Group**, where he was a venture capitalist from 2001 to 2003. Senor left Carlyle in 2003 for a brief stint as White House Press Secretary **Scott McLellan**'s deputy before shipping off to Iraq. Though he showed up in Iraq as a junior press handler, Senor is now Bremer's senior advisor and for most of last summer he was in charge of organizing Iraq's post-Saddam media, an effort which most have rated as little short of a disaster.

More examples can be found at the Ministry of Education, often cited by the White House as one of the CPA's signal successes. Who runs the Ministry of Education? The chief American advisor to the Minister of Education is **Williamson Evers**, a school voucher advocate and Libertarian activist from the **Hoover Institution** who was an education policy advisor on the Bush 2000 campaign. The first of Evers's two deputies is **Leslye Arsht**, a Republican education policy wonk who served as deputy press secretary under **Ronald Reagan** and then in the Department of Education under **George H.W. Bush**. Evers's second deputy was **Jim Nelson**, President George W. Bush's education commissioner from when he was governor of Texas. (Nelson recently returned stateside.)

Each of the three has education policy credentials. But one searches their résumés in vain for any evidence of the sort of expertise that would suit them to rebuild an educational system in an Arab country in the aftermath of war, a decade of sanctions, and two generations of totalitarian rule.

To date, Evers and his team have resisted the urgings of their colleagues back in Washington to foist on Iraq vouchers and other schemes conservatives have thus far failed to get enacted in the United States. But critics say that even the much-hyped successes getting schools refurbished and reopened may not stand up to scrutiny. The White House routinely trumpets the fact that 1,595 of Iraq's 10,000 schools have already been rehabilitated. But when *Newsweek* reporters visited five of those schools in October, they found each one trash-strewn, poorly supplied, and mostly a wreck.

More such "help" may be on the way in the person of **Rich Galen**, veteran GOP-spin meister, former spokesman for Vice President **Dan Quayle** and onetime head of **Newt Gingrich**'s GOPAC. In late October, Galen received the call to serve his country in Iraq as yet another of Bremer's Senior Advisors. His gig? Adding more artillery to the Iraq War spin operation. "My job," Galen told *The New York Post* before shipping off, "will be to help reporters on the ground find interesting stories that they can use. If there's a civil-affairs unit out of Manhattan that rebuilt a school, it might be of interest to Channel 5 but not to a network."

CPA officials say that the older GOP functionaries do a reasonable job keeping their partisanship publicly under wraps. But the younger Republicans in Iraq spend much of their time plotting against the Democrats. "Everything is seen in the context of the election, and how they will screw the Democrats," said one CPA official. "It was really pretty shocking to hear them talk."

"They are all on the campaign trail," said another official. "They see this as a stepping stone to a better job in the next Bush administration."

"I don't always know if they are Republicans," said yet another senior CPAer. "But what is clear is that they know nothing about development, and nothing about transitional economies." They're trying to do the right thing, this official adds, "but they do what they do without any knowledge of how the post-war world works in reality. They come up with harebrained schemes that cause so many problems they take more time to fix than to create."

It's also driven journalists on the ground, watching these operatives move in and out of Saddam's marble Republican Palace, which CPA commandeered as its headquarters, to joke: "They don't call it the *Republican* Palace for nothing." ●

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MEMO OF THE MONTH

Federal Emergency Management Agency

Washington, D.C. 20472

August 4, 2003

MEMORANDUM FOR: All FEMA Employees

FROM: Michael Brown
Under Secretary
Emergency Preparedness and Response

SUBJECT: Retaining the FEMA name

It is with great pride that I announce today that we will be retaining the name Federal Emergency Management Agency and the acronym FEMA to identify us within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). This decision, on the part of DHS Secretary Tom Ridge and other DHS officials, clearly shows the respect our new colleagues have for us and our work on behalf of the American people. As part of DHS, we will continue to meet our mission while working to help the entire department show that it merits the trust given to it by President Bush and the country.

Effective immediately, please use Federal Emergency Management Agency to refer to the agency, our employees and our work. The FEMA acronym will be used on all letterhead, business cards, signage and other products in conjunction with the DHS seal, as outlined in the DHS seal and signature guidelines. Specific usage guidance on the seal will be distributed shortly. The new DHS seal will unify and rally all DHS employees and make it easier for public and private stakeholders to understand what we do.

Retaining the FEMA name will assure the public that we remain ready to assist them before, during and after any disaster they might face – natural or manmade. Its use, in conjunction with the DHS seal, allows FEMA's past successes and future contributions to come together in a visible, tangible way.

Being a part of the new Department of Homeland Security is not only a privilege, but an incredible opportunity for us to team up with our new partners to make this country safer from all hazards, including terrorism. As we continue our work as FEMA, I encourage each and every one of you to look for new opportunities to work with our colleagues in the department to better secure the homeland. That is our obligation, our commitment, and our duty to this Nation.

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A Time to Choose

How Democrats started losing the abortion debate.

By Amy Sullivan

On Oct. 21 of this year, the Senate passed the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act and sent it to President Bush for his signature, thus enacting the first ever federal prohibition of a specific abortion procedure. Anti-abortion activists rejoiced that the legislation, first introduced in Congress eight years ago and vetoed twice by President Bill Clinton, was now law. Abortion rights groups were dispirited, but not surprised by their defeat and took solace in the belief that the legislation would be declared unconstitutional (and, in fact, three federal judges have since issued separate decisions blocking the ban). Most Americans were no doubt simply relieved that the gruesome and controversial debate was going away.

Democrats were left asking themselves—or should have been asking themselves—what went wrong. After all, Democrats (and pro-choice Republicans) are generally where the public is on abortion. Fully 77 percent of Americans, according to a January 2003 Gallup poll, support the right to choose in some or all circumstances. And yet, Republicans (and pro-life Democrats) successfully passed a "partial-birth" abortion ban that won 80 percent public support. There's a simple explanation for this apparent contradiction. Most Americans support a woman's right to choose. But they also have a general moral discomfort with "late-term" abortions, performed during the last few months of pregnancy. Anti-abortion activists and legislators played on that moral unease and achieved broad support for the bill largely by focusing their public campaigns on the vivid pictures and descriptions of "partial-birth" abortions performed late-term.

Of course, their public campaign was misleading. If doctors can't use this particular procedure, they will substitute another—so the "partial-birth" prohibition will not reduce the number of abortions at all. Anti-abortion groups know this perfectly well, but the bill is still more than a symbolic victory. Having won this fight, they will go on to legislate bans against other abortion procedures, eventually making abortions almost impossible to obtain. "That procedure isn't what we care most about," admits John Jakubczyk, the general counsel for Arizona Right to Life. "Our goal is to stop the killing of unborn children at any stage of development."

Those who support a woman's right to choose need to find a way to expose this dishonesty while affirming their alignment with the public's general pro-choice outlook. To do that, they must grapple with the average voters' real discomfort with late-term abortions—a discomfort that only increases as advances in science make it possible for younger and younger fetuses to survive outside the womb. The obvious solution is a law that would preserve the right to early-term abortions while prohibiting late-term ones except in cases where a mother's health is threatened.

Such a law would largely put an end to the decades-old trench warfare over abortion, marginalizing conservatives who favor a total ban. It would be consistent with the underlying concept, fetal viability, that the Supreme Court used to determine the stages of pregnancy during which government regulation or prohibition of abortion would or would not be constitutional. It would reduce the number of abortions performed—itself a goal most voters agree is important, so long as it doesn't come at the expense of women's health and safety. And it would have the support of the overwhelming majority of the American public.

With luck, such a bill may some day pass. But it won't be easy. I know, because six years ago, I tried. As a Senate staffer, I worked with a group of senators from both parties for such a compromise. We failed, and the story of that failure illustrates the power of organized extremists

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on both sides to thwart a great idea.

Stabbing baby dolls

In the spring of 1995, during a lull in the abortion war, Rep. Charles Canady (R-Fla.), a conservative anti-abortion politician, came across a disturbing but fascinating paper written a few years earlier by an Ohio doctor named Martin Haskell. The paper outlined an abortion procedure that sounded horrific. As Haskell described it, the procedure involved moving a fetus to the birth canal, depressing its skull, and then removing the entire body from the patient. The aspect that struck Canady—and other anti-abortion advocates—was this: The fetus was still alive until only its head still remained inside the patient.

Haskell called the procedure "dilation and extraction" (also known as D&X) and advocated it as faster, cleaner, and safer than removing the fetus by pieces—the other common method for second-trimester abortions. The "why" of the procedure did not matter to Canady—he recognized that the "how" was immensely important. He now had a weapon with which to restart the abortion wars, which had lost steam in previous years following several abortion rights victories. The clunky medical term "dilation and extraction" wouldn't do, however. So a staffer suggested "partial-birth" abortion. A new phrase entered the political lexicon.

Canady, then chair of the House Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution (he is a Jeb Bush-appointed district court judge in Florida), now introduced the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act of 1995, and held a hearing on the bill in his subcommittee the very next day. Using very few words, the bill made it a crime for any doctor to perform the procedure he called "partial-birth" abortion.

In one swift, brilliant move, Canady had taken the abortion debate away from the question of timing, where it had stalemated, and focused it instead on the gruesome description of a procedure. Although the American public was generally in favor of keeping abortion legal, people didn't want to think about the actual procedures involved, especially when performed on a late-term fetus. This new strategy put those details front and center.

One week after the introduction of Canady's bill, Sen. Bob Smith (R-N.H.) joined the cause with his own version of the legislation and a show-stopping performance on the Senate floor during which he "demonstrated" the abortion procedure by stabbing a baby doll in the neck with a pair of scissors. In quick succession, both the House and Senate Judiciary Committees held hearings on the issue and approved the legislation. The full House and Senate each passed the bill by late 1995, but, the following spring, Clinton vetoed the legislation, arguing that it failed to provide an exception for threats to the health of the mother.

By the time the Republican leadership scheduled a vote to override Clinton's veto—waiting until less than a month and a half before the 1996 election—it was clear that "partial-birth" had become a losing topic for Democrats. During the August recess, senators had gotten an earful about it from constituents, most of whom reacted viscerally to the description of D&X Sen. Tom Daschle (D-S.D.) was one of those who began to hear about "partial-birth" everywhere he went. Returning to the Senate in September, senators prevailed upon the Democratic Leader to head off a protracted fight over the issue, and Clinton talked to him about it during a fall trip to South Dakota to stump for Senate candidate Tim Johnson. One week later, the vote to override Clinton's veto fell nine votes short in the Senate. But the larger battle was just warming up.

When not how

The prospect of debating in circles for years over an abortion procedure whose description gave even staunch abortion rights senators the willies was not a welcome one for Democrats. Many viewed the example of Tom Harkin — who saw a 15-point lead in his 1996 reelection campaign evaporate within the space of two weeks after his opponents raised the "partial-birth" issue—as a cautionary tale. Others were genuinely tired of opposing abortion restrictions that fell just short of being reasonable. Some of these senators were politically liberal, but came from religious backgrounds that had firm, clear teachings on abortion, and they often found it difficult to reconcile their political and religious beliefs.

Although they had not sought this battle, some Democrats found that the debate over "partial-birth" abortion gave them an opportunity to do what they felt was the right thing for the right reasons. Under normal circumstances, abortion rights organizations would never let them get away with writing a bill intended to restrict abortion. But the emotional nature of the "partial-birth" debate had swayed public opinion away from a hard "pro-choice" stance and abortion rights organizations worried that the issue might marginalize them.

So just weeks after the veto override vote, Daschle led a group of like-minded senators—(including Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.), Tom Harkin (D-Iowa), Olympia Snowe (R-Maine), Susan Collins (R-Maine), and Joe Lieberman (D-Conn.)—in an effort to develop legislation that would restrict abortion while protecting women. I was one of the staff members who participated in the effort that would be known as the Alternative, as many of the senators considered it a better way to address the problem of abortion than the "partial-birth" ban. Our unique approach was to focus not on how an abortion was performed, but on when.

The answer that provided the defining framework for the legislation was that before viability, the point at which a fetus can live outside the womb, abortion should be legal and doctors should be able to use the safest procedure available. After viability, however, abortion—regardless of the procedure used—should be restricted to those instances in which it is absolutely necessary to protect a woman's life or health. These were the key points on which Daschle and his colleagues agreed, and they formed the basis of the Alternative.

In theory, this made brilliant political sense. It would

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leave in place a woman's right to choose in the first few months of pregnancy. It would reduce the overall number of abortions—something a partial-birth ban would not accomplish—thus appealing to moderate conservatives. Pro-life advocates might still push for a partial-birth abortion ban, but without the ability to use images of fully-formed, Gerber-like babies, the issue would have far less emotional traction. The Alternative, in short, would fulfill Clinton's popular and oft-repeated goal of making abortions "safe, legal and rare."

Getty Images

George W. Bush signs the Partial-Birth Abortion Act of 2003 as (L-R) Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-UT), Rep. F. James Sensenbrenner (R-WI), Sen. Rick Santorum (R-PA) and Rep. James Oberstar (D-MN) look on Nov. 5, 2003 in Washington, DC.

Mental case

But first we would have to assuage the fears of abortion rights leaders. Though rattled by the partial-birth juggernaut, and modestly open to new ideas, they were not exactly keen to discuss any legislation that would severely limit the number of abortions, even late-term ones, and unwilling to sign on to the Alternative. That in itself wasn't such a bad thing—in fact, an endorsement by organizations like NARAL would make it virtually impossible for us to attract conservative support. But liberal senators wanted some assurance that the groups did not oppose the Alternative. The abortion-rights groups refused to offer such a pledge, but they wanted to remain part of the discussion to develop the legislative language, meaning—we believed—that if we could address their concerns, we could still keep them from opposing the bill.

On Feb. 25, 1997, an article appeared in *The New York Times* that moved momentum in our direction. In the article, Ron Fitzsimmons, executive director of the National Coalition of Abortion Providers, admitted that D&X is actually used tens of thousands of times each year for any number of reasons, including on healthy, pre-viability fetuses. This infuriated pro-choice senators who, in voting against the partial-birth ban, cited arguments provided by pro-choice groups, that the D&X procedure was used "less than one hundred times each year." Pro-choice groups were forced to admit that this figure referred only to third-trimester D&X abortions.

Another move by pro-choice groups also strengthened the resolve of senators backing the Alternative. Some pro-choice activists told reporters that they could not support the compromise bill because it failed to provide an exception that would allow a woman to have an abortion to protect her mental health. But in private, these same leaders could not provide one hypothetical case in which a woman would require a post-viability abortion because of threats to her mental—but not physical—health. In truth, "mental health" was a code for allowing women to abort severely deformed fetuses on the grounds that carrying such a fetus was a great psychological burden.

Next, we worked on winning the support of moderate anti-abortion GOP senators. Devout anti-abortion senators refused to consider the Alternative if it included a health exception, claiming that any allowance for health was simply a loophole. This belief is based on a willful misinterpretation of abortion law by anti-abortion leaders, who have promoted the idea that doctors are obligated to consider "emotional, psychological, familial, and physical" factors when they consider a woman's health. In fact, *Doe v. Bolton*, the companion case to Roe that is generally understood to have provided the foundation for determining what health is in the context of abortion, says that doctors *may* consider those factors as pertinent to a woman's health, not that they *must*.

But a few senators indicated they would be willing to consider voting for an exception that was specifically limited to threats to a woman's "physical" health, and they debated the relative merits of various modifiers to "physical" to make the exception as strict as possible. At one point, trying to allay the concerns of senators on both ends of the spectrum, some of my colleagues and I turned to the thesaurus in a desperate attempt to find language that would be acceptable to all. Was "serious bodily injury" strict enough? What about "substantial risk of grave impairment to the health"? "Serious risk of substantial impairment?" In the end, the senators settled on "grievous." That won over Sen. Mary Landrieu (D-La.) and drew pro-life senators such as Byron Dorgan (D-N.D.) and Kent Conrad (D-N.D.) closer to our camp.

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We also went to work trying to line up support from the medical community. One of the objections lodged by anti-abortion groups was that they didn't trust doctors to use their best medical judgment to determine either when viability took place or when a woman's health was in danger. The implicit suggestion was that many doctors were all too eager to perform late-term abortions and would abuse their power to make any situation fit into the exceptions written into the bill. We made the case to the American Medical Association (AMA) that the partial-birth ban was an infringement on their professional independence. We also worked with a subgroup of the AMA, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), to develop legislative language that was understandable to doctors—giving them a clear idea of when abortions could and could not be performed—and they ultimately lent their professional endorsement to the Alternative. ACOG's parent organization, however, the AMA played hard to get.

Surprisingly, Nancy Roman, a reporter for *The Washington Times*, the conservative daily in Washington, D.C., then began writing front-page stories documenting bipartisan support for the Alternative and indicating that it represented a good-faith effort to find middle ground. "I can't believe Tom has gone this far," one Senate Republican told her, adding, "I'm not sure what I'm going to do. It definitely puts pressure of those of us who are pro-life." The subhed for one article proclaimed, "Proposal stricter than GOP measure," with the text describing the Alternative as "go[ing] further in restricting abortion than the GOP's partial-birth ban."

Republicans in the Senate were enraged by the positive press coming from "their" newspaper and Republican Whip Don Nickles contacted editors at *The Washington Times* to express his dissatisfaction. Within a few days, Roman was first pulled off the assignment and then put back on. The damage had already been done, though. The positive quotes given to Roman by Republican senators revealed that at least some of Daschle's conservative colleagues viewed his Alternative as something other than a crass attempt to gain political cover.

Doctoring the law

Both pro-life and pro-choice groups went on the offensive. In the absence of a mental health exception, NARAL threatened to count a vote in favor of the Alternative as an "anti-choice" vote – a ridiculous threat, since it would put them in the position of assigning "pro-choice" marks to such "partial-birth" ban proponents as Sens. Bob Smith (R-N.H.) and Rick Santorum (R-Pa.). "Here's the deal," an anonymous abortion rights activist told a reporter, "We don't like the Daschle bill. It would be a gigantic step toward rolling back abortion rights."

Anti-abortion groups, meanwhile, went on the offensive before they had even seen legislative language for the Alternative, running notices decrying the "loopholes" in newspapers around the country. The Southern Baptist Convention called the Alternative a "transparent political sham." And the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops commissioned full-page ads that suggested women sought late-term abortions because they "can't fit into a prom dress," a line they later admitted was invented by an ad agency

Meanwhile the AMA was lobbying furiously to see the exact language of the health exception – a provision that we had kept under wraps in an attempt to keep the focus on drawing a legal line at viability and to forestall attacks based on the specific wording of the bill. Finally, under pressure, we relented, faxing to the AMA's chief lobbyist on the issue a copy of language prohibiting post-viability abortions except in cases where a doctor concludes that continuation of the pregnancy would risk "grievous injury" to a woman's "physical health." Within 24 hours, that health definition found its way to the office of Republican Whip Don Nickles and appeared in the pages of *The Washington Times*.

In a final blow, the AMA ultimately refused to support the bill, claiming a history of neutrality regarding abortion legislation. Opponents were thrilled, noting at every opportunity that, "Even the American Medical Association does not endorse..." Just weeks later, however, the AMA changed this longstanding position of neutrality and professional objectivity in order to endorse the "partial-birth" abortion ban after obtaining higher Medicare reimbursement rates for doctors. An internal AMA audit later concluded that the organization "blundered" and that the endorsement was politically, and not medically, motivated. But that would come much later. As the bill made its way to the floor, those advocacy groups we had hoped would stay neutral were joining the fight against the bill.

The Alternative ultimately came to the floor of the Senate for consideration and debate on May 14, 1997—which happened to also be my birthday. I celebrated by spending 10 hours sitting next to Daschle behind the floor leader's desk, watching him lead off debate with a 45-minute presentation that impressed even hardened political opponents with his command of the complex constitutional and medical issues involved. He outlined the framework of the Alternative and explained how it was a constitutional approach to restricting the abortions that Americans want to see eliminated while allowing those that Americans want to see protected.

Rick Santorum led the floor fight against the Alternative from the conservative side, proclaiming with wide-eyed fury that the bill would "allow them to stab... [blink, blink]...babies...[blink, blink]...in the neck," and slashing at the air with his pen. Barbara Boxer, who had told Daschle she would not lobby against the bill, attacked on the Alternative's opposite flank, passing around a letter from Harvard law professor Lawrence Tribe in which he warned that the Alternative could be unconstitutional, and she urged her colleagues to oppose the Alternative on those grounds. Throughout the day, lobbyists from all sides lurked just outside the Senate chamber to catch senators as they made their way in and out.

As the day wore on, an unexpected number of senators were still undecided. Freshman Sens. Mary Landrieu and

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Susan Collins spent the day working the phones as unofficial whips for the Alternative, since Democratic Whip Harry Reid, a firm pro-lifer, had already committed to voting against the measure. The energetic Landrieu talked to senators, chiefs of staff, and to even the most junior legislative aides, trying to get a sense of where the votes lay. Meanwhile, discussion on the Senate floor continued under the watchful eye of Senate Chaplain Lloyd Ogilvie who, in a very unusual move, sat in the chamber observing debate.

Ultimately, both anti-abortion and abortion rights senators found excuses to oppose the Alternative based on its very nature of trying to achieve consensus on a difficult issue. Because the language wasn't written to appeal exclusively to one side in the debate, extremists on both ends nit-picked provisions in the bill that weren't "pure" enough. One by one, senators fell away from the final tally of supporters—this one because the health exception was too broad, that one because it was too narrow; this one thought doctors were given too much discretion, that one thought doctors' hands were tied. Senators who wanted to oppose the measure took cover in the tightly-written definitions that had been intended to insure that the bill's impact was not vague or confusing, twisting the language to suit their purposes.

When the clerk called the roll for a final vote on the Alternative, Sens. Snowe and Collins were the only Republicans to vote in favor. Eleven Democrats (an assortment of strong pro-lifers such as Fritz Hollings and Bryon Dorgan, and strong pro-choicers including John Glenn, Frank Lautenberg, and Dianne Feinstein) voted against the bill. In the end, the Alternative, considered both too permissive and too restrictive, was defeated by a vote of 64 to 36.

Even so, *The Washington Times* wasn't through with the Alternative. Roman's story on the eventual defeat of the Alternative led with the intriguing news that Senator Daschle "said he is willing to reintroduce a version of the bill that might appeal to Republicans," a move that Daschle had previously refused to take. The lede no doubt came as a surprise to Daschle because it was simply not true. Neither was the quote that followed it: "'I'd be willing to talk to them,' Mr. Daschle said yesterday, upon learning that Republicans might reconsider his proposal. 'I'd be willing to compromise.'" Simply put, the quote was fabricated and the lede was a lie. Roman sent Daschle a personal apology several weeks later, explaining that the story was submitted as a clean piece and that the suspect lede and quote were inserted by editors.

Roe model

And yet, the Alternative was never so popular as in defeat. Leading conservatives immediately scolded Republicans for missing their last best chance to cooperate with Democrats on abortion legislation, recognizing that the Alternative would have been a big step toward reducing abortion rates. *The Wall Street Journal* ran an op-ed urging Republicans to reconsider. "You can't be so used to drubbing your enemy that you don't recognize it when they make some sense," William Bennett told *The Washington Times*. "If I didn't know who sponsored this, I would have thought it was a pro-life Republican." And, after the "partial-birth" ban passed the Senate still short of the votes necessary to override a veto, Bill Kristol asked, "Do you want the best to be the enemy of the good even if there is a little bit of a loophole? Isn't it better to have a ban of abortion on viable fetuses than no ban?"

It's a question that should be taken seriously. If the sponsors of the Partial-Birth Ban Act are to be believed, their bill will not stop one single abortion. They have always claimed that a health exception wasn't necessary because "another procedure can always be used." This is an arguable assertion. But if they believe their own rhetoric, anti-abortion politicians must recognize that the ban would simply require doctors to use another procedure to perform the same abortion, resulting a zero net effect on abortion rates. Of course, most ban proponents understand that the "partial-birth" ban is just phase one in a strategy that aims to outlaw all abortion procedures. After all, once politicians have voted to prohibit D&X, they can't very well allow a procedure that dismembers fetuses.

At the same time, abortion rights activists missed an opportunity to reassure a public made wary by the "partial birth" issue. Some liberal commentators took them to task for being stubbornly near-sighted. Clarence Page, noting that Clinton, at least, understood the politics of the situation, wrote: "By supporting a measure that would protect women from 'grievous injury'—and watching his foes shoot it down—Clinton robs Republicans of a chance to embarrass him. Instead, he helps widen the 'gender gap.'" In the end, abortion rights supporters fell back on the argument that the Alternative would have been unconstitutional—an assertion that is unknowable, although there is no question that the measure was far more constitutional than the "partial-birth" ban. When pressed, however, some abortion rights leaders admitted that they would rather see a truly bad bill become law because it would be much easier to fight in the courts. This is the classic abortion rights strategy William Saletan writes about in *Bearing Right: How Conservatives Won the Abortion War*, and one which has painted pro-choice Democrats into a corner. It is a strategy that rests on a confident assumption that the U.S. Supreme Court would back them up, an outcome that is far from certain now that they stand just one Supreme Court retirement away from the possibility of losing the once-inviolate protection of abortion in *Roe v. Wade*.

It's time for defenders of a woman's right to choose, both Democrats and Republicans, to revisit the Alternative. Its moral, policy, and political logic are if anything more compelling than they were six years ago. Of course, there won't be an opportunity to raise the issue again if Republicans retain the White House and Congress in November. That's why a savvy and aggressive Democratic nominee for president ought to campaign on it now. ◆

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In the Tank

The intellectual decline of AEI.

By Benjamin Wallace-Wells

In 1998, John R. Lott Jr., an economist then working as an instructor at University of Chicago Law School, published *More Guns, Less Crime*, a book that argues that arming civilians has a substantial deterrent effect on violence. He produced data seeming to show that deaths from multiple-victim shootings dropped 90 percent in states that passed laws permitting concealed weapons. His book tipped the terms of the debate, handing the gun lobby, which had previously relied on brute politicking to win over lawmakers, a devastatingly effective academic study supporting their side. Conservative legislators in several states used his book to push through laws permitting civilians to carry guns. Lott used the book's profile to get off the itinerant academic circuit, and land a permanent post as a fellow at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), Washington's premier conservative think tank.

This spring, two economists, Ian Ayres of Yale and John J. Donohue III of Stanford, published a paper charging Lott with falsifying his statistics. Then things really got weird. Someone named "Mary Rosh" started turning up on Web sites where Lott's work was being discussed, claiming to be a former student of the embattled academic and defending him vigorously. Some Web loggers investigated and couldn't find any student of his by that name. Eventually, Lott admitted that he himself was "Mary Rosh." Criticism continued to mount, though both Lott and his sponsors at AEI have argued that Ayres and Donohue's paper contained inaccuracies of its own. Several other academics called into question separate aspects of his scholarship, the National Academy of Sciences set up an expert panel to establish whether he'd fabricated data (the panel is still investigating), and the editor in chief of *Science* called Lott a "fraud."

Had Lott been in academia, he would almost certainly have lost his job—as did Michael Bellesiles, the Bancroft Prize-winning liberal historian from Emory University, who resigned after a panel found he had faked data purporting to show that fewer Americans had actually possessed guns in the 19th century than historians had previously thought. But AEI is not a university. It is a conservative think tank, operating in a world where penalties for bad scholarship hardly exist. AEI did not fire Lott, or reprimand him, or even investigate him. The institute's president, Christopher DeMuth, repeatedly refused to even answer reporters' questions about the incident. Indeed, several AEI fellows had warned DeMuth of their suspicions on Lott's lack of scholarly honesty back when AEI was recruiting him in 2000. DeMuth hired Lott anyway. In an email to *The Washington Monthly*, DeMuth defended Lott and questioned critiques of his work, adding, "We welcome and encourage challenges to our research rather than regarding them as cause for empaneling boards of investigation."

Since coming to AEI, Lott, not previously known as a polymath, has expanded his range of pronouncements, penning papers and op-eds on everything from the disputed votes in Florida (he published a study which seemed to show that blacks hadn't been discriminated against, a charge which was vigorously disputed), to the McCain-Feingold campaign reform bill (he's against it) to Rush

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Limbaugh's firing from ESPN for saying the media let black quarterbacks like the Philadelphia Eagles' Donovan McNabb off the hook too easily (Lott dashed off a quick regression analysis which purported to show that the media was, indeed, less inclined to criticize black quarterbacks). Last month, AEI proudly led its Web site with an op-ed by Lott, arguing that gun-safety locks "are more likely to cost lives than to save them."

Books by AEI scholars

The scholarship of others at the think tank has been challenged. Laurie Mylroie, a leading Iraq scholar and AEI fellow, has theorized that al Qaeda is an agency of Iraqi intelligence, that Saddam Hussein was behind the first bombing of the World Trade Center, and that Iraqi intelligence was linked to Oklahoma City bomber Terry Nichols—claims dismissed by countless experts in the field, and for which Mylroie has been unable to supply credible evidence (see "Armchair Provocateur" on page 27). And James Glassman, an AEI fellow and ubiquitous pundit, hosts an influential Web magazine whose editorials frequently mirror arguments made by lobbyists for its corporate sponsors (see "Meet the Press" on page 32).

Plenty of intellectuals offering disputed research lurk in other Washington think tanks, liberal as well as conservative—often B-team refugees from the academy who have not managed to get tenure. But AEI is in a different league, because of the influence its scholars wield in Washington and their consequent power to turn research into government policy. There's Lawrence Lindsay, former AEI scholar and until this year head of the White House's National Economic Council, who, among other things, counseled the president not to support new corporate accountability measures in the wake of the Enron scandal. There's AEI scholar Leon Kass, chairman of the President's Council on Bioethics, whose advice led the president to restrict federal funding for research on future stem-cell lines based on a gross overestimate of the number of the lines already existing (see "Science Friction" from our July/August issue). Indeed, the whole idea that regime change in Iraq should be at the center of American policy was nurtured at AEI, by current and former AEI fellows who became the architects of the administration's war in Iraq, including de-fense advisor Richard Perle and Under Secretary of Defense Douglas Feith. Dick Cheney is a former senior fellow of the institute, and Paul Wolfowitz a former member of its Council of Academic Advisors. It is perhaps not coincidental that so many Bush administration officials formulated their policy ideas at a think tank that takes a laissez-faire view of scholastic rigor. Indeed, AEI has both enabled and been enabled by the general drift of conservative culture in Washington, one in which information from forged documents about yellowcake uranium makes its way into the State of the Union address, and a mounting GI body count is deemed a sign of the enemy's desperation.

Deep lobbying

Thirty years ago, AEI was a mainstream, economic policy and political science think tank—and a number of respected centrist analysts still at the institute, like William Schneider and Norman Ornstein, embody that old style. But beginning in the '70s, and increasingly since DeMuth took over in 1986, AEI has put in place an astonishingly successful formula for attracting money and garnering influence, which has matched the increasingly aggressive style of Washington's conservative community.

First, AEI started courting conservative scholars outside its traditional spheres of economics and political science, particularly in the fields of social and foreign policy. These included Irving Kristol, Jeanne Kirkpatrick, and other neoconservatives who felt out of place, even discriminated against, in liberal academia, and who undoubtedly brought a more clever, penetrating, disputatious intellectual style to the organization. From the start, they also used AEI as a platform from which to float scholarly-sounding ideas that had not passed academic muster, but which informed Republican policy. Irving Kristol's protégé Jude Wanniski, the godfather of supply-side economics, used an AEI fellowship to write his 1978 book *The Way the World Works*,

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which promoted the dubious Laffer Curve, and its purported proof that tax cuts lead to more net government revenue. And Charles Murray, then as now an AEI fellow, wrote 1995's *The Bell Curve*, which argued that intelligence test score differences among the races were in part genetically determined. High-profile scholars like these also attracted large grants from conservative foundations such as Scaife and Bradley.

Second, AEI made a strategic decision to become a major advocate of economic deregulation, hiring teams of economists to produce papers arguing for looser government oversight of particular industries. In this, the organization was not only following the currents of Washington thinking, especially within the Republican Party. It was also positioning itself to take advantage of a profound but little-noted change in the rules governing Washington's influence-peddling game. Traditionally, business interests eager to garner public favors have relied on K-Street lobbyists to make their case directly to officials. But over the last decade, a series of reforms has severely limited the tools with which lobbyists gain access. For instance, new rules prohibit elected officials and their staffs from accepting meals that cost more than $20, meaning they can no longer accept invitations to expensive D.C. restaurants and allow the lobbyists to pick up the check. Similar restrictions on industry-funded junkets have further restricted the ability of lobbyists to "educate" officials.

Consequently, business interests have been forced to find less rule-bound venues for the hundreds of millions of dollars they have available to influence the policy process, and think tanks have become one of the places of choice. As 501(c)3 charitable institutions, think tanks are not bound by hospitality restrictions, and so can offer public servants a movable feast of fancy policy-seminar lunches and all-expense-paid fact-finding trips to foreign countries.

Think tanks provide ideal cover for the advancement of a funder's economic or political agenda by shaping the intellectual atmosphere that surrounds Washington decision-makers, a process Steven Clemons of the centrist New America Foundation calls "deep lobbying." Think tank scholars enjoy more credibility when quoted in newspapers, speaking on TV, or testifying on the Hill than do paid industry spokesmen, even when both are making the same arguments, and even when the expert's scholarship is laughably bad. And short of endorsing specific candidates for political office, there are no restrictions on what think tanks can say in these venues—or what they can write in the policy briefs that flood congressional offices.

Such freedom is perfectly defensible. One wouldn't want to limit scholarly free speech and inquiry. But as think tanks like AEI have garnered lucrative grants from corporations and industry trade groups, incentives have mounted to pick their experts and tailor their intellectual product to suit the givers' interests, even if that means cutting corners on scholastic rigor.

AEI is not necessarily the most aggressive player in the "deep lobbying" game. Indeed, many of its scholars remain intellectually independent and ideologically idiosyncratic. Nor is AEI the only right-of-center think tank to advocate both deregulation and conservative social and foreign policy. It has, however, arguably done the best job of marrying these ideas into an overall worldview that supports the conservative political movement—a worldview perhaps best exemplified by AEI scholar Michael Novak, who in books like The *Catholic Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* argues that the government has a Christian imperative to cut taxes. It's easy, then, to understand why AEI was so eager to recruit, and ignore the failings of, John Lott, whose arguments against gun restrictions pleased both the libertarian and social conservative wings of the GOP.

Of course, conservative think tanks have no monopoly on ridiculous theories, sloppy research, agenda-driven reasoning, and pathological groupthink. All of this is endemic to many universities, where liberal scholars reign and Democrats—more so than Republicans—turn to for policy ideas, expertise, and validation. The difference is that academia is governed by some basic rules of conduct. Books and papers are peer-reviewed. Up-and-coming scholars know that their work will be scrutinized by tenure committees. Universities have established procedures to investigate accusations of fraud and punish those found guilty of it. Think tanks, by contrast, have few such systems of internal checks. Behavior that would be considered a firing offense in academia is not necessarily considered in the think-tank world, especially when a scholar's work advances the institution's political mission and attracts funding.

It's a good thing, of course, that think tanks provide a place for out-of-the-box thinkers with controversial views. But think tanks should also provide guardrails to ensure that the work of these scholars is not specious or fraudulent.

Considering the direct connection between the research put together at AEI and the policies made at the highest levels of the U.S. government, it's in everyone's interest that those ideas and that research be as sound as possible. Empowering the IRS to do a better job of making sure non-profit think tanks are not abusing their non-profit status might help. But that's not going to happen under the current administration, and no one should want the federal government in the business of regulating thought. Think tanks could voluntarily put in place more checks on dubious research. But there is no incentive in the current environment in Washington for them to do so. Think tanks like AEI will only change if and when the elected officials who use their ideas as the basis for policy decide that those ideas are getting them in deep political trouble. Unfortunately, a lot of damage can be done between now and then. ◆

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Armchair Provocateur

Laurie Mylroie: The Neocons' favorite conspiracy theorist.

By Peter Bergen

Americans supported the war in Iraq not because Saddam Hussein was an evil dictator—we had known that for many years—but because President Bush had made the case that Saddam might hand off weapons of mass destruction to his terrorist allies to wreak havoc on the United States. As of this writing, there appears to be no evidence that Saddam had either weapons of mass destruction or significant ties to terrorist groups like al Qaeda. Yet the belief that Saddam posed an imminent threat to the United States amounted to a theological conviction within the administration, a conviction successfully sold to the American public. So it's fair to ask: Where did this faith come from?

In the past year, there has been a flood of stories about the thinking of neoconservative hawks such as Richard Perle, until March the chairman of the influential Defense Policy Board and a key architect of the president's get-tough-on-Iraq policy. Perle has had a long association with the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), a conservative think tank that was also home to other out-of-power hawks during the Clinton years such as John Bolton, now under secretary of state for arms control and international security affairs. It was at AEI that the idea took shape that overthrowing Saddam should be a fundamental goal of U.S. foreign policy. Still, none of the thinker/operatives at AEI, or indeed any of the other neocon hawks such as Paul Wolfowitz, were in any real way experts on Iraq or had served in the region. Moreover, the majority of those in and out of government who were Middle East experts had grave concerns about the wisdom of invading Iraq and serious doubts about claims that Saddam's regime posed an urgent threat to American security. What, then, gave neoconservatives like Wolfowitz and Perle such abiding faith in their own positions?

Historians will be debating that question for years, but an important part of the reason has to do with someone you may well have never heard of: Laurie Mylroie. Mylroie has an impressive array of credentials that certify her as an expert on the Middle East, national security, and, above all, Iraq. She has held faculty positions at Harvard and the U.S. Naval War College and worked at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, as well as serving as an advisor on Iraq to the 1992 Clinton presidential campaign. During the 1980s, Mylroie was an apologist for Saddam's regime, but reversed her position upon his invasion of Kuwait in 1990, and, with the zeal of the academic spurned, became rabidly anti-Saddam. In the run up to the first Gulf War, Mylroie with *New York Times* reporter Judith Miller wrote *Saddam Hussein and the Crisis in the Gulf*, a well-reviewed bestseller translated into more than a dozen languages.

Until this point, there was nothing controversial about Mylroie's career. This would change with the bombing of the World Trade Center in 1993, the first act of international terrorism within the United States, which would launch Mylroie on a quixotic quest to prove that Saddam's regime was the most important source of terrorism directed against this country. She laid out her case in *Study of Revenge: Saddam*

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Hussein's Unfinished War Against America, a book published by AEI in 2000 which makes it clear that Mylroie and the neocon hawks worked hand in glove to push her theory that Iraq was behind the '93 Trade Center bombing. Its acknowledgements fulsomely thanked John Bolton and the staff of AEI for their assistance, while Richard Perle glowingly blurbed the book as "splendid and wholly convincing." Lewis "Scooter" Libby, now Vice President Cheney's chief of staff, is thanked for his "generous and timely assistance." And it appears that Paul Wolfowitz himself was instrumental in the genesis of *Study of Revenge*: His then-wife is credited with having "fundamentally shaped the book," while of Wolfowitz, she says: "At critical times, he provided crucial support for a project that is inherently difficult."

None of which was out of the ordinary, except for this: Mylroie became enamored of her theory that Saddam was the mastermind of a vast anti-U.S. terrorist conspiracy in the face of virtually all evidence and expert opinion to the contrary. In what amounts to the discovery of a unified field theory of terrorism, Mylroie believes that Saddam was not only behind the '93 Trade Center attack, but also every anti-American terrorist incident of the past decade, from the bombings of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania to the leveling of the federal building in Oklahoma City to September 11 itself. She is, in short, a crackpot, which would not be significant if she were merely advising say, Lyndon LaRouche. But her neocon friends who went on to run the war in Iraq believed her theories, bringing her on as a consultant at the Pentagon, and they seem to continue to entertain her eccentric belief that Saddam is the fount of the entire shadow war against America.

Hussein on the brain

According to Bob Woodward's book *Bush at War*, immediately after 9/11 Wolfowitz told the cabinet: "There was a 10 to 50 per cent chance Saddam was involved." A few days later, President Bush told his top aides: "I believe that Iraq was involved, but I'm not going to strike them now." However, the most comprehensive criminal investigation in history—involving chasing down 500,000 leads and interviewing 175,000 people—has turned up no evidence of Iraq's involvement, while the occupation of Iraq by a substantial American army has also uncovered no such link. Moreover, the U.S. State Department's counterterrorism office, which every year releases an authoritative survey of global terrorism, stated in its 2000 report: "[Iraq] has not attempted an anti-western attack since its failed attempt to assassinate former President Bush in 1993 in Kuwait." In other words, by 9/11, Saddam's regime had not engaged in anti-American terrorism for almost a decade.

Ideas do not appear out of nowhere, so how is it that key members of the Bush administration believed that Iraq had been so deeply involved in terrorism directed at U.S. targets for many years? For that we must turn to Mylroie's *Study of Revenge*, which posits that Iraq was behind the first Trade Center attack, a theory that is risible as hundreds of national security and law enforcement professionals combed through the evidence of the '93 bombing, certainly looking, amongst other things, for such a connection, and found no evidence. But Mylroie claims to have discovered something that everyone else missed: the mastermind of the plot, a man generally known by one of his many aliases, "Ramzi Yousef," was an Iraqi intelligence agent who some time after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990 assumed the identity of a Pakistani named Abdul Basit whose family lived there. This was a deduction which she reached following an examination of Basit's passport records and her discovery that Yousef and Basit were four inches different in height. On this wafer-thin foundation she builds her case that Yousef must have therefore been an Iraqi agent given access to Basit's passport following the Iraq occupation. However, U.S. investigators say that "Yousef" and Basit are in fact one and the same person, and that the man Mylroie describes as an Iraqi agent is in fact a Pakistani with ties to al Qaeda.

Mylroie appears never to have absorbed the implications of Occam's Razor, the basic philosophical and scientific principle generally understood to be: "Of two competing theories or explanations, all other things being equal, the simpler one is to be preferred." In this case the simpler—and more accurate—explanation of Yousef/Basit's identity is that he was part of the al Qaeda network, not working for Baghdad. Indeed, an avalanche of evidence demonstrates that Yousef was part of the loosely knit al Qaeda organization, evidence that Mylroie does not consider as it would undermine all her suppositions.

When Yousef flew to New York from Pakistan in 1992 before the bombing of the Trade Center, he was accompanied by Ahmad Ajaj, who was arrested at Kennedy Airport on immigration charges, and was later found to have an al Qaeda bomb-making manual in his luggage. Al Qaeda member Jamal al-Fadl told a New York jury in 2000 that he saw Yousef at the group's Sadda training camp on the Pakistan-Afghanistan border some time between 1989 and 1991. When Yousef lived in the Philippines in the early 1990s, his partner in terrorism was Wali Khan Amin Shah, who had trained in Afghanistan under bin Laden. A number of Yousef's co-conspirators had ties to a Brooklyn organization known as the Afghan Refugee Center. This was the American arm of an organization bin Laden founded in Pakistan during the mid-1980s that would later evolve into al Qaeda. Yousef's uncle, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, sent him money for the Trade Center attack, and would later go on to become al Qaeda's military commander and the chief planner of 9/11. I could go on. The point is that the 1993 attack was plotted not by Iraqi intelligence, but by men who were linked to al Qaeda.

In addition to ignoring Yousef's many connections to al Qaeda, Mylroie is clearly aware that in 1995, he gave what would be his only interview to the Arabic newspaper *al Hayat* since she alludes to it in her book *Study of Revenge*. "I have no connection with Iraq," said Yousef to his interviewer, adding for good measure that "the Iraqi people must not pay for the mistakes made by Saddam." "Yousef," who traveled under a variety of false identities, confirmed that his real name was indeed Abdul Basit and that he was a Pakistani born in

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Kuwait, and also admitted that he knew and admired Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman, one of al Qaeda's spiritual gurus, whom the U.S. government would later convict of plotting terror attacks in New York. Yousef went on to say that he wanted to "aid members" of Egypt's Jihad group, a terrorist organization then led by Ayman al-Zawahiri, who is now bin Laden's deputy. Yousef's interview has the ring of truth as he freely volunteered that he knew Sheikh Rahman, the cleric whom the U.S. government had by then already identified as the inspiration for several terrorist conspiracies in New York during the early '90s and also explained that he was part of an Islamic movement which planned to carry out attacks in Saudi Arabia to avenge the arrests of Sheikh Salman al-Audah and Sheikh Safar al-Hawali, radical clerics who have profoundly influenced both bin Laden and al Qaeda. Yousef knew that he was likely facing a lifetime in prison at the time of this interview, and so had little reason to dissemble. In *Study of Revenge*, Mylroie is careful not to mention the substance of what Yousef said here as it demolishes her theory that he was an Iraqi agent.

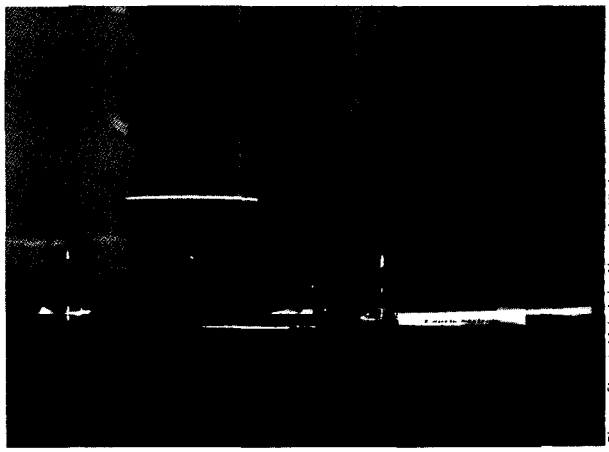

Photo of Laurie Mylroie by Alexander Kirshner

In what amounts to the discovery of a unified field theory of terrorism, Mylroie believes that Saddam was behind every anti-American terrorist incident of the past decade, from the '93 Trade Center attack to the bombing in Oklahoma City to September 11.

Moreover, Mylroie's broader contention that the first Trade Center attack was an Iraqi plot is, to put it mildly, not shared by the intelligence and law-enforcement officials familiar with the subsequent investigation. Vince Cannistraro, who headed the C.I.A.'s Counterterrorist Center in the early 1990s, told me, "My view is that Laurie has an obsession with Iraq and trying to link Saddam to global terrorism. Years of strenuous effort to prove the case have been unavailing." Ken Pollack, a former C.I.A. analyst, scarcely to be described as "soft" on Saddam—his book *The Threatening Storm: The Case for Invading Iraq* made the most authoritative argument for toppling the dictator—dismissed Mylroie's theories to me: "The NSC [National Security Council] had the intelligence community look very hard at the allegations that the Iraqis were behind the 1993 Trade Center attack. Finding those links would have been very beneficial to the U.S. government at the time, but the intelligence community said that there were no such links."

Mary Jo White, the no-nonsense U.S. attorney who successfully prosecuted both the Trade Center case and the al Qaeda bombers behind the 1998 attacks on U.S. embassies in Africa, told me that there was no evidence to support Mylroie's claims: "We investigated the Trade Center attack thoroughly, and other than the evidence that Ramzi Yousef traveled on a phony Iraqi passport, that was the only connection to Iraq." Neil Herman, the F.B.I. official who headed the Trade Center probe, explained that following the attacks, one of the lower-level conspirators, Abdul Rahman Yasin, did flee New York to live with a family member in Baghdad: "The one glaring connection that can't be overlooked is Yasin. We pursued that on every level, traced him to a relative and a location, and we made overtures to get him back." However, Herman says that Yasin's presence in Baghdad does not mean Iraq sponsored the attack: "We looked at that rather extensively. There were no ties to the Iraqi government." In sum, by the mid-'90s, the Joint Terrorism Task Force in New York, the F.B.I., the U.S. Attorney's office in the Southern District of New York, the C.I.A., the N.S.C., and the State Department had all found no evidence implicating the Iraqi government in the first Trade Center attack.

Perles of wisdom

As Mylroie was fighting against the tide of expert opinion to prove her case that Saddam was behind the '93 bombing, her neocon colleagues at AEI and elsewhere were formulating an alternative vision of U.S. foreign policy to challenge what they saw as the feckless and weak policies of the Clinton administration. Mylroie's research and expertise on Iraq complemented the big-think strategizing of the neocons, and a symbiotic relationship developed between them, as evidenced by the garlands that the neocons bestowed upon her for her work. Wolfowitz gushingly blurbed *Study of Revenge*: "[Her] provocative and disturbing book argues that...Ramzi Yousef, was in fact an agent of Iraqi intelligence. If so, what would that tell us about the extent of Saddam Hussein's ambitions? How would it change our view of Iraq's continuing efforts to retain weapons of mass destruction and to acquire new ones? How would it affect our judgments about the collapse of U.S. policy toward Iraq and the need for a fundamentally new policy?" (How, indeed...) James Woolsey, another prominent Iraq hawk who headed the C.I.A. between 1993 and 1995, also weighed in: "Anyone who wishes to continue to deal with Saddam by ignoring his role in international terrorism...and by giving only office furniture to the Iraqi resistance now has the staggering task of trying to refute this superb work." *Study of Revenge* was reissued after 9/11 as *The War Against America*, Woolsey contributing a new foreword that described

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Mylroie's work as "brilliant and brave."

It is possible, of course, that the neocons did not find Mylroie's research to be genuinely persuasive, but rather that her findings simply fit conveniently into their own desire to overthrow Saddam. Having blurbed her first book as "wholly convincing," Richard Perle now says that "not everything she says is convincing" and that Mylroie's thinking was "not very important" to the development of his own views on Iraq. At the same time, Perle continues to praise Mylroie's investigative skills, even saying she should be put in charge of "quality control" at the C.I.A. So there are reasons to think that people like Perle actually were persuaded by her research. As the one member of the neocon team with serious credentials on Iraq, Mylroie offered opinions which would naturally have carried special weight. That she was a genuine authority, whose "research" confirmed their worst fears about Saddam, could only have strengthened their convictions.

The evidence that the hawks really believed her theories can be seen in their statements and actions following September 11. Shortly thereafter, Woolsey was dispatched to the United Kingdom on an extraordinary trip, apparently sanctioned by Wolfowitz, to check out a key aspect of Mylroie's argument about Yousef. During the early '90s, Abdul Basit, the Pakistani whose identity Yousef had supposedly assumed, attended a Welsh college to study electrical engineering. Mylroie writes that Basit was quite different in appearance from Yousef, thus further proving her contention that Yousef was a substitute, a fact that could be proved by visiting Basit's former college in Wales. As Woolsey has made no comment on his trip to the United Kingdom, it's fair to assume that his efforts to replicate these findings did not meet with success. However, around the second anniversary of 9/11, Vice President Dick Cheney continued to echo Mylroie's utterances when he told NBC's Tim Russert that Iraq was "the geographic base of the terrorists who have had us under assault for many years, but most especially on 9/11," a demonstrably false theory that Mylroie has been vigorously touting since this past summer.

In July, Mylroie published a new book *Bush vs. the Beltway*, which reprised many of the themes of *Study of Revenge*. The subtitle of her new tome tells you where the book is headed: *How the CIA and the State Department Tried to Stop the War on Terror*. The book charges that the U.S. government actually suppressed information about Iraq's role in anti-American terrorism, including in the investigation of 9/11. Luckily, *Bush vs. the Beltway*, which reads in part like Bush 2004 campaign literature, does have at least one heroic figure: "There is an actual hero, in the person of the president who could not be rolled, spun or otherwise diverted from his most solemn obligation."

Bush vs. the Beltway, the subject of additional hosannas from both Woolsey and Perle, claims that Khalid Sheik Mohammed, the now-captured mastermind of 9/11, is an Iraqi intelligence agent, like Ramzi Yousef, who adopted the identity of a Pakistani living in Kuwait. Funnily enough, the U.S. government doesn't seem to have explored this intriguing theory. Why not? According to Mylroie, a plot is afoot to prevent Mohammed's unmasking. Shortly after *Bush vs. the Beltway* was published, she appeared as an expert witness before the blue-ribbon commission investigating 9/11, testifying that "there is substantial reason to believe that these masterminds [of both the '93 and 9/11 Trade Center attacks] are Iraqi intelligence agents." Mylroie explained that this had not been discovered by the U.S. government because "a senior administration official told me in specific that the question of the identities of the terrorist masterminds could not be pursued because of bureaucratic obstructionism." So we are expected to believe that the senior Bush administration officials whom Mylroie knows so well could not find anyone in intelligence or law enforcement to investigate the supposed Iraqi intelligence background of the mastermind of 9/11, at the same time that 150,000 American soldiers had been sent to fight a war in Iraq under the rubric of the war on terrorism. Please.

Further undermining Mylroie's theory about Khalid Sheik Mohammed is the fact that since his apprehension in Pakistan, KSM, as he's known to law enforcement, has specifically denied any connection to Iraq, at the same time that he has offered up actionable intelligence about terror plots in the United States. A senior U.S. counter-terrorism official told me that KSM, like several other high-ranking al Qaeda operatives, has disgorged much useful information following the use of coercive methods that include making him "uncomfortable and withholding water and sleep." As a result of KSM's interrogations, Iyman Faris, a trucker living in Ohio, was arrested for plotting to cut through the cable supporting the Brooklyn Bridge and was sentenced in October to 20 years in prison.

Zeitgeist heist

Mylroie declined to be interviewed for this article "with regret," so the only chance I have had to talk with her came this past February, when we both appeared on Canadian television to discuss the impending war in Iraq and Saddam's putative connections to terrorism. As soon as the interview started, Mylroie began lecturing in a hectoring tone: "Listen, we're going to war because President Bush believes Saddam Hussein was involved in 9/11. Al Qaeda is a front for Iraqi intelligence...[the U.S.] bureaucracy made a tremendous blunder that refused to acknowledge these links... the people responsible for gathering this information, say in the C.I.A., are also the same people who contributed to the blunder on 9/11 and the deaths of 3,000 Americans, and so whenever this information emerges they move to discredit it." I tried to make the point that Mylroie's theories defied common sense, as they implied a conspiracy by literally thousands of American officials to suppress the truth of the links between Iraq and 9/11, to little avail.

At the end of the interview, Mylroie, who exudes a slightly frazzled, batty air, started getting visibly agitated, her finger jabbing at the camera and her voice rising to a yell as she outlined the following apocalyptic scenario: "Now I'm going to tell you something, OK, and I want all Canada to understand, I want you to understand the con-

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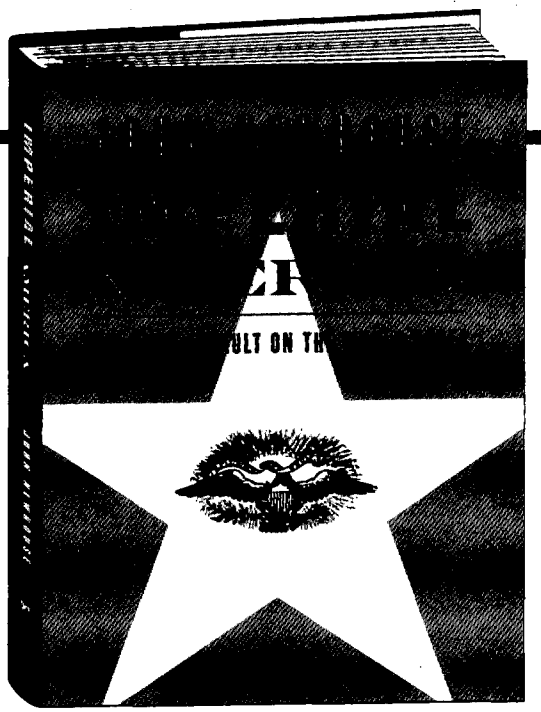
sequences of the cynicism of people like Peter. There is a very acute chance as we go to war that Saddam will use biological agents as revenge against Americans, that there will be anthrax in the United States and there will be smallpox in the United States. Are you in Canada prepared for Americans who have smallpox and do not know it crossing the border and bringing that into Canada?"

This kind of hysterical hyperbole is emblematic of Mylroie's method, which is to never let the facts get in the way of her monomaniacal certainties. In the case of the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing, she has said that Terry Nichols, one of the plotters, was in league with Ramzi Yousef. Richard Matsch, the veteran federal judge who presided over the Oklahoma City bombing case, ruled any version of this theory to be inadmissible at trial. Mylroie implicates Iraq in the 1996 bombing of a U.S. military facility in Saudi Arabia which killed 19 U.S. servicemen. In 2001, a grand jury returned indictments in that case against members of Saudi Hezbollah, a group with ties not to Iraq, but Iran. Mylroie suggests that the attacks on two U.S. embassies in Africa in 1998 might have been "the work of both bin Laden and Iraq." An overseas investigation unprecedented in scope did not uncover any such connection. Mylroie has written that the crash of TWA flight 800 into Long Island Sound in 1996 likely was an Iraqi plot. A two-year investigation by the National Transportation Safety Board ruled it was an accident. According to Mylroie, Iraq supplied the bomb-making expertise for the attack which killed 17 U.S. sailors on the USS Cole in Yemen in 2000. No American law enforcement official has made that claim. Mylroie blames Iraq for the post-9/11 anthrax attacks around the United States. Marilyn Thompson, the *Washington Post*'s investigations editor, who has written an authoritative book on those attacks, says, "The F.B.I. has essentially dismissed this theory and says there is no evidence to support it." A U.S. counter-terrorism official remarked: "Mylroie probably thinks the Washington sniper was an Iraqi."

In her book *Bush vs. the Beltway*, Mylroie approvingly quotes the maxim "we should not love our opinions like our children." It's long overdue that she heed this excellent piece of advice. Saddam is guilty of many crimes, not least the genocidal policies he unleashed on the Marsh Arabs and the Iraqi Kurds, but there is no evidence linking him to any act of anti-American terrorism for the past decade, while there is a mountain of evidence that implicates al Qaeda.

Unfortunately, Mylroie's researches have proven to be more than merely academic, as her theories have bolstered the argument that led us into a costly war in Iraq and swayed key opinion-makers in the Bush administration, who then managed to persuade seven out of 10 Americans that the Iraqi dictator had a role in the attacks on Washington and New York. So, her specious theories of Iraq's involvement in anti-American terrorism have now become part of the American *zeitgeist*. Meanwhile, in a recent, telling quote to *Newsweek*, Mylroie observed: "I take satisfaction that we went to war with Iraq and got rid of Saddam Hussein. The rest is details." Now she tells us. ●



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Meet the Press

How James Glassman reinvented journalism—as lobbying.

By Nicholas Confessore

In the fall of 1999, journalist James K. Glassman and economist Kevin A. Hassett published a book provocatively titled *Dow 36,000: The New Strategy for Profiting From the Coming Rise in the Stock Market.* The New Economy was not a high-tech version of tulipmania, they argued, and the stock market was not overvalued. Properly understood, wrote Glassman and Hassett, the Dow—then upwards of 10,000—was actually undervalued: "Stock prices could double, triple, or even quadruple tomorrow and still not be too high." It was a bold thesis, and more than a few skeptics disputed it in op-eds and book reviews. But this was the height of the boom, the authors were telling Wall Street exactly what it wanted to hear, and *Dow 36,000* was a sensation. It rapidly became a *New York Times* bestseller, sparking incessant water-cooler conversation and wide coverage on the nation's business pages. Glassman, having already been a chat-show host and nationally syndicated financial columnist for *The Washington Post*, became a bona-fide celebrity, widely profiled in the press and invited on television shows across the country to predict that the party, far from being over, was just getting started.

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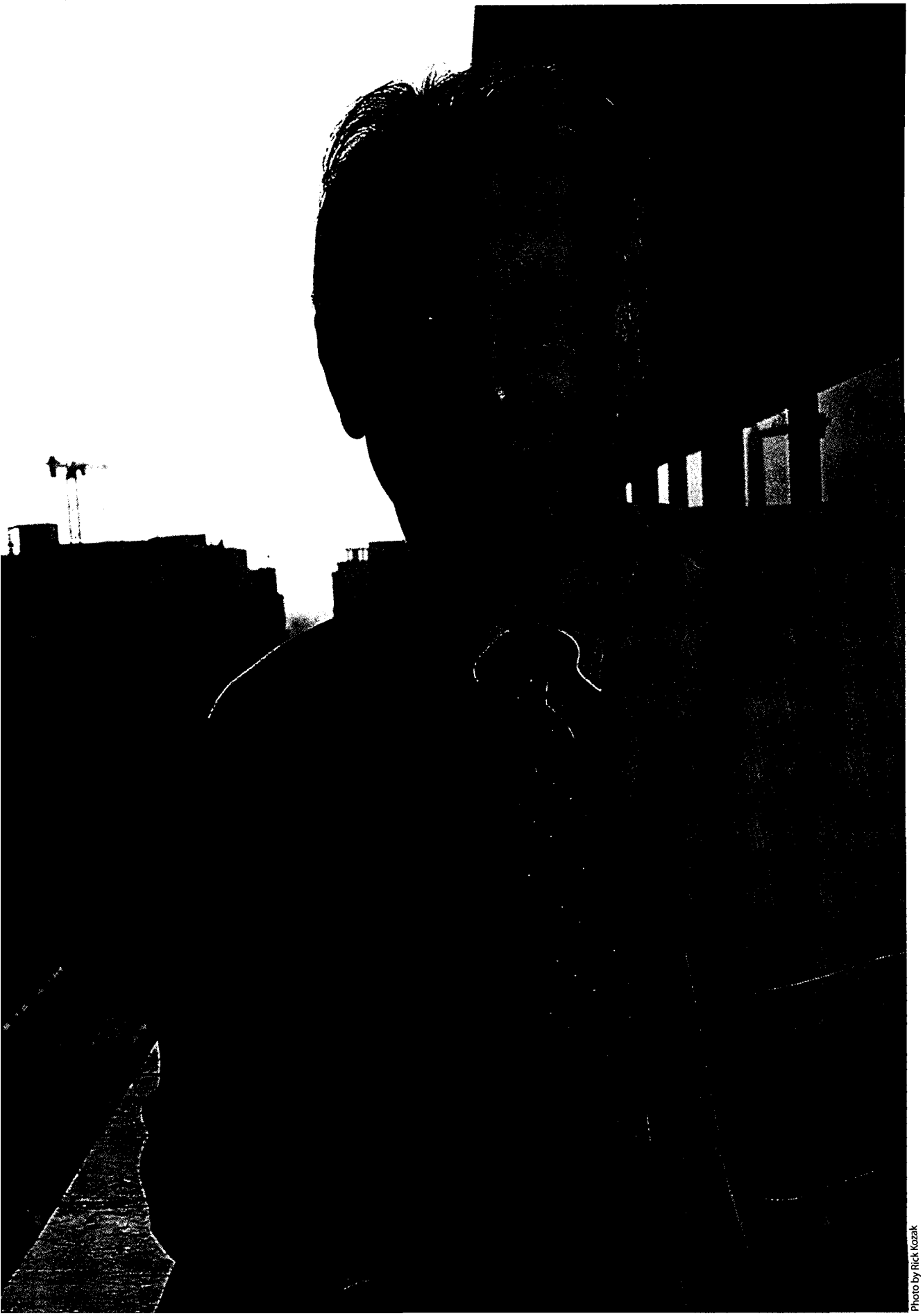

Photo by Rick Kozak

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So optimistic was Glassman, in fact, that a few months after the book appeared, he launched a dot.com, Tech Central Station, based on just the kind of vague-but-intriguing business plan that attracted so much venture funding at the height of the tech boom. TCS would be "a cross between a journal of Internet opinion and a cyber think tank open to the public," as Glassman described it in a press release accompanying the site's New York launch party, held in Grand Central Station. TCS would be part *Slate*, part *Red Herring*, articulating "a high-tech agenda of freedom and opportunity" with a libertarian conservative bent.

Within a few months, of course, Glassman was forced to eat a certain amount of crow. The market peaked, then plunged 3,000 points over the course of two years, before struggling back to slightly below where it was when *Dow 36,000* was published. Meanwhile, the dot.com bubble burst, burying thousands of Web ventures and billions of investor dollars. Many of Glassman's peers were ruined. (Conservative high-tech guru George Gilder, for instance, lost over 90 percent of the subscribers to his newsletter and still has a lien on his house.)

But Glassman not only survived the crash—he thrived. He was soon back on *The Washington Post*'s business page dispensing stock picks and earning sizable fees on the lecture circuit. Last year, he even published another investment tome, this one titled *The Secret Code of the Superior Investor: How to Be a Long-Term Winner in a Short-Term World.* Most surprisingly of all, Tech Central Station is one of the few Internet magazines to grow into middle age. Today, the hybrid venture enjoys a monthly readership approaching that of Web sites for more established public affairs magazines. It has around 100 columnists and semi-regular contributors, and runs smartly-written think pieces by the likes of Newt Gingrich, James Pinkerton, and Michael Fumento.

Glassman's triumph owes, in part, to his quick mind, deft prose style, and telegenic presence. But the real secret of his success is that the market Glassman writes about is very different from the one in which he thrives: the burgeoning world of Washington influence-peddling. As a writer and public figure, Glassman has, over time, aligned his views with those of the business interests that dominate K Street and support the Republican Party; he has also increasingly taken aggressive positions on one side or another of intra-industry debates, rather like a corporate lobbyist. Nowhere is this more apparent than on TCS, where Glassman and his colleagues have weighed in on everything from which telecommunications technologies should be the most heavily regulated to whether Microsoft is a threat to other software companies.

But TCS doesn't just act like a lobbying shop. It's actually published by one—the DCI Group, a prominent Washington "public affairs" firm specializing in P.R., lobbying, and so-called "Astroturf" organizing, generally on behalf of corporations, GOP politicians, and the occasional Third-World despot. The two organizations share most of the same owners, some staff, and even the same suite of offices in downtown Washington, a block off K Street. As it happens, many of DCI's clients are also "sponsors" of the site it houses. TCS not only runs the sponsors' banner ads; its contributors aggressively defend those firms' policy positions, on TCS and elsewhere.

James Glassman and TCS have given birth to something quite new in Washington: journo-lobbying. It's an innovation driven primarily by the influence industry. Lobbying firms that once specialized in gaining person-to-person access to key decision-makers have branched out. The new game is to dominate the entire intellectual environment in which officials make policy decisions, which means funding everything from think tanks to issue ads to phony grassroots pressure groups. But the institution that most affects the intellectual atmosphere in Washington, the media, has also proven the hardest for K Street to influence—until now.

More Kemp than Bork

Glassman has always had a knack for seeing opportunities before others do. After graduating from Harvard in 1969, he and his wife moved to New Orleans and launched *Figaro*, an early harbinger of the urban alternative weeklies that would proliferate in the coming decades. After selling the paper in 1978, he moved to Washington and up the media food chain, with stints as an editor or publishing executive first at *Washingtonian* and *The New Republic*, then at *Atlantic Monthly* and *U.S. News & World Report*. In the mid-1980s, he also began to pen an occasional column on business for *TNR* and other publications. Most business writing of the time was dull and technical, but Glassman's articles had charm and flavor. They ranged from a satirical look at

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corporate tax evasion (titled "How to Beat the I.R.S.: With llamas, Scottish stamps, and rent-a-cows") to a lacerating profile of Lee Iacocca, the former Chrysler executive. ("Something about Lee Iacocca," he wrote, "inspires exaggeration.")

His next business success was with *Roll Call*, a Capitol Hill newspaper bought by Arthur Levitt in 1986, when it was little more than a sleepy newsletter with four employees and an unpaid circulation of 5,000. Hired as the paper's editor, Glassman quickly amassed a group of energetic young reporters and pushed them to cover the Hill less like a legislative sausage factory and more like a community. Several former staffers describe him as a laid-back boss who strolled the offices with a golf putter and threw raucous election night parties at his house on Capitol Hill. "He was a great story editor, and a spectacular editorial writer," says Levitt. "His mission, when he signed on, was to create a paper which screams, 'Read me.' And he did that."

The Web site Glassman hosts doesn't just act like a lobbying shop. It's actually published by one—the DCI Group, a prominent Washington firm specializing in P.R., lobbying, and so-called "Astroturf" organizing, generally on behalf of corporations, GOP politicians, and the occasional Third-World despot.

Just as importantly, Glassman—with his wife, Mary, who served as publisher—figured out how to make *Roll Call* a financial success. Through the 1980s, Washington's lobbying industry had grown massively, as businesses rushed to extract favors from a sympathetic Reagan administration. Glassman convinced individual corporations and trade associations to supplement their handshake lobbying with advertisements in the pages of *Roll Call*, promoting or attacking pending legislation. "It was a singular business insight," says Glenn Simpson, an early Glassman hire who now writes for *The Wall Street Journal*. "You have a captive audience of 535 of the most powerful people in the world and their 10,000 staff members who all read you closely, and then you have all these people who want to influence those people." Within a year, circulation more than doubled and *Roll Call*'s ad pages increased sevenfold. Levitt eventually awarded Glassman equity in the paper, which by all accounts made him a wealthy man when he sold it in 1993.

As he became more successful, the onetime student radical and McGovernik also moved right. In 1995, by then a business columnist for *The Washington Post*, Glassman began moonlighting for the op-ed. page; there, during the height of Gingrichism, he assailed federal student loans, defended high CEO pay, and agitated for the flat tax. Articulate and irreverent, Glassman was also a hit on Washington chat shows. In the fall of 1996, he was named a fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, a leading conservative think tank and a kind of government-in-exile for Republican officials from the first Bush administration. But though he had become increasingly conservative, Glassman was more Jack Kemp than Robert Bork; as a pundit, he usually favored the shiv over the cudgel. During fierce congressional debate over the National Endowment of the Arts, for instance, many conservatives appeared to consider the likes of "Piss Christ" a portent of American decline. Glassman's objection to the NEA was more practical: Based on the available evidence, he noted, "Government money makes bad art."

Like most pundits, of course, his predictions were not always borne out by events. In a column shortly before the 1996 election, for instance, he wrote that the stock market might "nose dive" if Bill Clinton were re-elected president. Nor was Glassman always consistent. In a 1994 column, he attacked those of his colleagues "who give speeches to trade associations and corporations and get paid $2,000 or $5,000 or even $30,000 a pop" and confessed to giving up his own then-modest lecture schedule because he felt "uneasy" about the potential conflicts. Later, his conscience balmed, Glassman would rejoin the speakers' circuit, commanding up to $15,000 a pop.

Glassman was extraordinarily prolific—and increasingly influential. By the late 1990s, his financial column in the *Post* was nationally syndicated; he was a regular contributor to *The Wall Street Journal* and other publications; and he hosted two different television programs, "TechnoPolitics" on PBS and the Sunday show "Capital Gang" on CNN. And as the stock market continued to climb, he found his next niche: tribune of the New Economy. Until then, Glassman's financial advice was invariably prudent and middle-of-the-road; like most sensible investment columnists, he told his readers to avoid day-trading, to buy and hold for the long-term, and to diversify their holdings. But in 1998, in the *Journal*, Glassman and Hassett published the first of several op-eds arguing against the notion that stocks might be overvalued. "We are not so foolish as to predict the short-term course of stocks," they wrote as the Dow was approaching 9,000, but "[w]orries about overvaluation ... are based on a serious and widespread misunderstanding of the returns and risks associated with equities." A year later, with the Dow breaking five figures and a book advance in their pockets, the two were somewhat less circumspect, predicting in a follow-up column that the Dow would hit 36,000—"tomorrow, not 10 or 20 years from now."

When *Dow 36,000* was finally published in book

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form, a number of reviewers took exception to the book's thesis on stock valuation. The *Journal*'s concluded that *Dow 36,000*, while well-argued, was "dangerous" to investors; Jeremy Siegel, a University of Pennsylvania economist on whose work Glassman and Hassett had based part of their argument, at one point complained that they had misinterpreted his data and drawn erroneous conclusions. But Glassman had become a prophet. By October 2000, with the Dow sinking, reported the *New York Observer*, Glassman was making over 100 speeches a year promoting his vision. "We are on the verge of a tremendous wealth explosion, the likes of which has never been seen," he told one group of New York investors.

The New New Journalism

Some months before the publication of *Dow 36,000*, Glassman's PBS show was cancelled, and he began to look around for a new gig. With his longtime friend Charles Francis, a prominent Republican lobbyist and public relations maestro, Glassman began approaching funders with a new pitch. Taking a nod from "TechnoPolitics," he envisioned an entity that would cover "the nexus between science and technology on the one hand and public policy on the other," as he later described it to me, with assorted "sponsors" and himself as the site's "host." Tech Central Station was launched in early 2000, with a smattering of content and one sponsor, AT&T. But Glassman had bigger plans. As he explained during a speech in Los Angeles not long after the launch, "We concentrate on such issues as Internet taxation, broad-band dissemination, privacy, biotechnology, high-tech trade, and so on," serving as "a kind of watchdog in an area in which few people seem to be doing long-term principled thinking on public policy." Glassman exulted, "I think in a sense we kind of invented a new sort of institution."

But what sort of institution, exactly? At first glance, TCS does resemble a think tank-cum-opinion magazine—indeed, a successful one. Each day, the site publishes a new batch of brisk, topical articles. In style and substance, TCS's content is an intellectual descendent of the rapid-response policy briefs pioneered by conservative think tanks during the 1980s, and as influential: The site's articles and contributors have been cited hundreds of times in the mainstream media and reprinted on op-ed pages across the country. TCS brings all of this off with a relatively small staff, drawing on the brainpower of established think tanks rather than housing and paying its own fellows and scholars, and publishing their arguments in its own "magazine" rather than hawking sound-bites to print reporters and columnists. "We can get the word out much more quickly [than a traditional think tank]," says Glassman, "and it's a lot less expensive not having a lot of bricks and mortar."

If TCS combines all the strengths of a modern advocacy think tank with the reach and accessibility of a successful political magazine, it has succeeded largely by rejecting the conventions that traditionally govern journalism and policy scholarship. Most traditional think tanks are organized under the 501(c)(3) section of the tax code and must disclose many details of how they are financed, being—at least in theory—expected to justify their nonprofit status with work in the public interest. Even think tanks of an acknowledged ideological bent seek to insulate the work of their scholars and fellows from the specific policy priorities of the businesses or foundations that provide their funding. Likewise, traditional newspapers and magazines, whether for-profit or not, keep a wall between their editorial and business sides; even at magazines of opinion, the political views of writers are presumed to be offered in good faith, uninfluenced by advertisers.

Unlike traditional think tanks, Tech Central Station is organized as a limited liability corporation—that is, a for-profit business. As an LLC, there is little Tech Central Station must publicly disclose about itself save for the names and addresses of its owners, and there is no presumption, legal or otherwise, that it exists to serve the public interest. Likewise, rather than advertisers per se, TCS has what it calls "sponsors," which are thanked prominently in a section one click away from the front page of the site. (AT&T, ExxonMobil, and Microsoft were early supporters; General Motors, Intel, McDonalds, NASDAQ, National Semiconductor, and Qualcomm, as well as the drug industry trade association, PhRMA, joined during the past year.) Each firm pays a sponsorship fee—although neither Glassman nor any of the sponsors would disclose how much—and gets banner advertisements on the site. When I contacted a few of the sponsors, each described their relationship to TCS in a slightly different way. An Intel spokeswoman said that TCS was "a consultant" to the computer-chip maker. AT&T's representative said her firm was "a funder." A Microsoft representative explained that the company "is constantly looking for ways to educate on some of the critical and important issues in the technology sector."

On closer inspection, Tech Central Station looks less like a think-tank-cum-magazine than a kind of lobbying practice. Which makes sense: Four of the five co-owners of TCS are also the co-owners of the DCI Group, the Washington public affairs firm founded by Republican operative Thomas J. Synhorst. TCS's fifth owner is Charles Francis, who is also a senior lobbyist at DCI and is listed on TCS's phone directory. And as it happens, three of TCS's sponsors—AT&T, General Motors, and PhRMA—have also retained DCI for their lobbying needs. (Both DCI's spokeswoman and TCS's chief executive officer declined to be interviewed for this article. However, after I requested comment, the Web site was changed. Where it formerly stated that

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"Tech Central Station is published by Tech Central Station, L.L.C.," it now reads "Tech Central Station is published by DCI Group, L.L.C.")

Like its publishing arm, DCI's business is to influence elite opinion in Washington. But instead of opinion articles, DCI specializes in what's known as "corporate-financed grass-roots organizing," such as setting up front groups to agitate for a client's position, placing letters to the editor with key newspapers, and using phone banks to generate calls to politicians. TCS, for its part, includes a disclaimer on its site noting that "the opinions expressed on these pages are solely those of the writers and not necessarily those of any corporation or other organization." But it is startling how often the opinions of TCS's writers and sponsors converge.

"He's conversant in many different topics," says an admiring former employee of Glassman," and he also knows how to talk like an expert on something even if he doesn't know anything about it."

Last July, for instance, PhRMA retained DCI to lobby against House legislation that would permit the reimportation of FDA-approved drugs from Canada and elsewhere. The same month, TCS put out a press release announcing that it planned to cover an upcoming bus trip taken by Canadian patients to "access prescription drugs and medical treatment" in the U.S. (The trip was sponsored in part by the Canadian subsidiaries of many of the same pharmaceutical companies that belong to PhRMA.) A few days after the press release was issued, TCS columnist Duane Freese published an article touting the bus trip and attacking the legislation; other contributors also wrote columns for the site attacking reimportation.

The articles on Tech Central Station address a broad range of issues, some of concern to its sponsors, many not. And most of the site's authors are no doubt merely voicing opinions they have already reached. But time and time again, TCS's coverage of particular issues has had the appearance of a well-aimed P.R. blitz. After ExxonMobil became a sponsor, for instance, the site published a flurry of content attacking both the Kyoto accord to limit greenhouse gasses and the science of global warming—which happen to be among ExxonMobil's chief policy concerns in Washington.

TCS's articles have also complemented work being done by DCI. During 2000, Microsoft contracted with DCI to perform various services, among them generating "grassroots" letters opposing a breakup of Microsoft and launching Americans for Technology Leadership, an anti-breakup group funded in part by Microsoft and run out of DCI's office. Meanwhile, down the hall, Tech Central Station went on the offensive, inaugurating an "anti-trust" section that over the coming months would publish little except defenses of Microsoft and attacks on the software maker's corporate and governmental antagonists, with occasional detours into the subject of lawsuit reform. (Microsoft smartly plugged some of the articles on its own Web site.)

Kill the bells

But the greatest asset Glassman offers the site's sponsors is himself. "He's conversant in many different topics," says an admiring former employee, "and he also knows how to talk like an expert on something even if he doesn't know anything about it." (For the record, AEI lists Glassman's research interests as "Social Security, economics, technology, politics, federal budget, interest rates, stock market, taxes, and education.") Glassman is not a registered lobbyist. But with his credentials as an AEI fellow and *Post* columnist, his knack for colorful writing, and his easy access to chat shows and op-ed pages across the country, he is an effective advocate for whatever side he chooses to take. And since becoming the "host" of TCS, he has often taken the side of the site's sponsors.

Until 2000, for instance, Glassman had written about the government's case against Microsoft on precisely one occasion. (He opposed it.) After Microsoft became a sponsor of TCS, he inveighed against the suit in nearly two dozen columns for the site. He also penned op-eds for another dozen or so publications and appeared on TV to attack a Microsoft breakup in vivid, even strident terms. (On "Crossfire" Glassman argued that one court decision in the suit placed "in jeopardy not just high technology, but, I think, the entire U.S. economy that's been booming.") When it came to the subject of climate change, on which he had seldom remarked before TCS was launched, Glassman became equally prolific, attacking Kyoto or the science of climate change in 40 columns for the site, many of them syndicated elsewhere. Meanwhile, he also took to the op-ed pages of *The Wall Street Journal*, the *St. Louis Dispatch*, and *The Washington Times* to trash Kyoto; in none of them did he disclose TCS's connection to ExxonMobil.

All of these positions are, in theory, perfectly compatible with Glassman's generally libertarian, anti-regulatory politics. But in at least one area—telecommunications—the only discernable consistency to Glassman's opinions is the degree to which they track those of A&T, the original sponsor of TCS. During 2001, in a string of columns and in an appearance before the House Judiciary Committee, Glassman criticized legislation that would have relaxed the

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requirement that regional Bells rent their phone lines to other companies, including AT&T, seeking to offer local services to the Bells' customers. Identifying himself as a journalist, think tank fellow, and host of TCS—but not disclosing the Web site's sponsorship by AT&T—Glassman told Congress that the bill, known as Tauzin-Dingell, would "kill" the Bells' competitors. Though this was perhaps the only area of policy in which he favored more government regulation, and though his position was similar to that of congressional Democrats and liberal public interest groups, Glassman argued his was actually the true expression of free market principles. "I have devoted much of my professional career to advocating deregulatory, free-market solutions to economic and social problems," he insisted. "I know deregulation when I see it, and the Tauzin-Dingell bill is not deregulation."

t's only human nature to put more trust in the arguments of seemingly independent observers than those of paid agents of an interested party. And that's why a journalist willing to launder the arguments of corporations and trade groups would be so valuable.

As it happens, however, AT&T was not merely an aspiring provider of local phone services. At the time, it was the largest owner of cable systems in the United States. During 1999, America Online, the Internet service provider, lobbied aggressively for legislation to force cable companies like AT&T to offer its services on their cable systems at government-mandated rates. But when Glassman later wrote about this issue, he took a very different view of government's requiring companies to open up their expensive hardware to competitors—although he again presented his position as a defense of high principle. "Common sense tells you that government has no business dictating the terms under which you rent your property to other people," he wrote on TCS. "But somehow, thanks to an aggressive lobbying campaign ... many reporters took seriously the idea that cable companies could be forced to rent out their property at prices set by government." The real principle, it would appear, is that government has no business forcing companies to share their wires with competitors—unless the competitor happens to sponsor a Web site one hosts.

During my brief phone interview with Glassman—he declined a follow-up—I asked him whether or not TCS published opinions that contradicted the policy views, of, say, AT&T. "Frankly, we think that other points of view are well represented everywhere else," he responded cheerfully. "To have one point of view on an issue like telecom is something that we don't have a problem with." He added, "We're an advocacy group. There's no doubt about that. I don't think we ever had pretenses of being an academic think tank."

The Rise of Idea Laundering

Government decision-makers are subject to a cacophony of opinions—from paid lobbyists, think tank scholars, academics, newspaper editorials, consumer groups, and letters from ordinary citizens. And in the past decade, corporate lobbying has evolved to influence—and, where possible, control—the arguments emanating from each of these sources. It's why corporations have put so much money into think tanks, issue advertisements, and consulting arrangements with economists and other academics. It's how firms like DCI have flourished by orchestrating pseudo-grassroots movements to simulate or amplify constituent opinion on behalf of corporate clients.

After all, it's only human nature to put more trust in the arguments of seemingly independent observers than those of paid agents of an interested party. And that's why a journalist willing to launder the arguments of corporations and trade groups would be so valuable. A given argument, coming from such a journalist, would have more impact than precisely the same case articulated by a corporate lobbyist.

Glassman certainly has impact. Earlier this year, the Federal Communications Commission considered whether regional Bell companies should continue to fully share their wires with competitors like AT&T—the position Democrats favored. The tiebreaking vote was cast by a conservative Bush appointee, Kevin Martin. Martin sided with his Democratic colleagues, a surprising position, but one made easier, say observers, by the fact that a few prominent conservative pundits, chief among them Glassman, had taken AT&T's side in the argument. "Glassman's clueless," opines an economist who specializes in telecom and supports relaxed regulations on both cable and phone systems. "But he gives good cover."

As he has so many times in his career, James Glassman has recognized a new and largely untapped opportunity for his journalistic talents. If his past is any guide, two things are likely to happen. Other journalists and pundits will follow suit, touching off a growth market in Washington journo-lobbying—and then that market will crash. ◆

Nicole S. Cohen, Alexander Kirshner, and Zachary Roth contributed to the reporting of this article.

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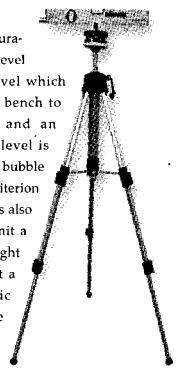

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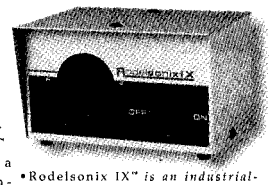

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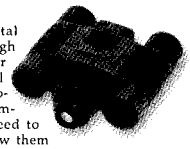

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The Good Spy

How the quashing of an honest C.I.A. investigator helped launch 40 years of JFK conspiracy theories and cynicism about the Feds

By Jefferson Morley

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It was 1:30 in the morning of Nov. 23, 1963, and John F. Kennedy had been dead for 12 hours. His corpse was being dressed at Bethesda Naval Hospital, touched and retouched to conceal the ugly bullet wounds. In Dallas, the FBI had Lee Harvey Oswald in custo

The Nov. 25, 1963 funeral procession of President John F. Kennedy crosses Memorial Bridge to Arlington Cemetery. *National Archives photo*

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The lights were still on at the Central Intelligence Agency's headquarters in Langley, Va. John Whitten, the agency's 43-year-old chief of covert operations for Mexico and Central America, hung up the phone with his Mexico City station chief. He had just learned something stunning: A C.I.A. surveillance team in Mexico City had photographed Oswald at the Cuban consulate in early October, an indication that the agency might be able to quickly uncover the suspect's background.

At 1:36 am, Whitten sent a cable to Mexico City: "Send staffer with all photos of Oswald to HQ on the next available flight. Call Mr. Whitten at 652-6827." Within 24 hours Whitten was leading the C.I.A. investigation into the assassination. After two weeks of reviewing classified cables, he had learned that Oswald's pro-Castro political activities needed closer examination, especially his attempt to shoot a right-wing JFK critic, a diary of his efforts to confront anti-Castro exiles in New Orleans, and his public support for the pro-Castro Fair Play for Cuba Committee. For this investigatory zeal, Whitten was taken off the case.

C.I.A. Deputy Director of Plans Richard Helms blocked Whitten's efforts, effectively ending any hope of a comprehensive agency investigation of the accused assassin, a 24-year-old ex-Marine, who had sojourned in the Soviet Union and spent time as a leftist activist in New Orleans. In particular, Oswald's Cuba-related political life, which Whitten wished to pursue, went unexplored by the C.I.A. The blue-ribbon Warren commission appointed by President Johnson concluded in September 1964 that Oswald alone and unaided had killed Kennedy. But over the years, as information which the commission's report had not accounted for leaked out, many would come to see the commission as a cover-up, in part because it failed to assign any motive to Oswald, in part because the government's pre-assassination surveillance of Oswald had been more intense than the government ever cared to disclose, and finally because its reconstruction of the crime sequence was flawed.

Both the story of Oswald and the C.I.A., and the way in which it leaked out in bits and pieces fueled a generation of conspiracy-minded authors, journalists, and filmmakers who mined Richard Helms's dubious legacy—a rich vein of ominous ambiguity and unanswered questions about one of the most jarring events of modern American history. The untimely end to Whitten's investigation, which prevented a public airing of what the government actually knew, also contributed to a generation of public cynicism about Washington—to a national mythology of skullduggery, and the suspicion that secret agencies in Washington were up to no good and the truth never gets out. In the decades since Kennedy's death, the "rogue C.I.A. assassin" has become a stock Hollywood character, his villainy engrained in spy movies and the popular culture.

Jefferson Morley's column, "World Opinion Roundup," appears every Tuesday and Thursday on washingtonpost.com. He can be reached via email at morleyj2000@yahoo.com.

Whitten's story, told here for the first time, has an uncomfortable new resonance today, as the Bush administration tries to thwart investigations into, among other things, what our intelligence agencies knew about Saddam's WMD programs before we went to war with Iraq. Whitten was a rare C.I.A. hero in the Kennedy assassination story whose personal odyssey is a poignant but unsettling reminder that inquiries into a national tragedy can be compromised early on. Intelligence mandarins, seeking to protect their positions, can override independent subordinates. Official deceptions can take decades to unravel. Embarrassing secrets, however, don't simply go away; eventually, they filter out, as the Kennedy case shows, often doing more harm to the country than they would have had the public known the truth earlier.

Stumbling into history

John Moss Whitten was born in 1920 to an itinerant Navy family and grew up in Annapolis, Md. After graduating from the University of Maryland with straight As, he did a stint as a captain in U.S. Army intelligence during World War II, interrogating captured German officers. After the war, he studied law at the University of Virginia, and after graduating in 1947 went to work at the newly formed C.I.A. He was a confident, well-built man with sandy hair and a pompous manner. Serving in Washington and Vienna, he built a reputation as an effective, if sometimes abrasive, officer and a skilled interrogator. In March 1962, Whitten was recalled to Washington to work in the agency's Western Hemisphere division. At his home in south Bethesda, Whitten struck neighbors as a genial State Department hand and amiable dinner-party host. At work, he was regarded as more than competent. In March 1963, he was again promoted, this time to be chief of all C.I.A. covert operations in Mexico and Central America.

Hours after the president's assassination, Whitten found himself at the center of history. The press reported that Oswald had lived for 32 months in the Soviet Union and that an anti-Castro student group claimed he had served as a spokesman for a pro-Castro organization, the Fair Play for Cuba Committee. With a shocked nation wondering if the assassination was a communist-inspired act of war, Helms called a meeting in his office, ordered his senior staff not to discuss the assassination, and announced that Whitten would review all internal files on Oswald.

The following morning, while he was being transferred to a more secure jail in Dallas, Oswald was shot dead by night-

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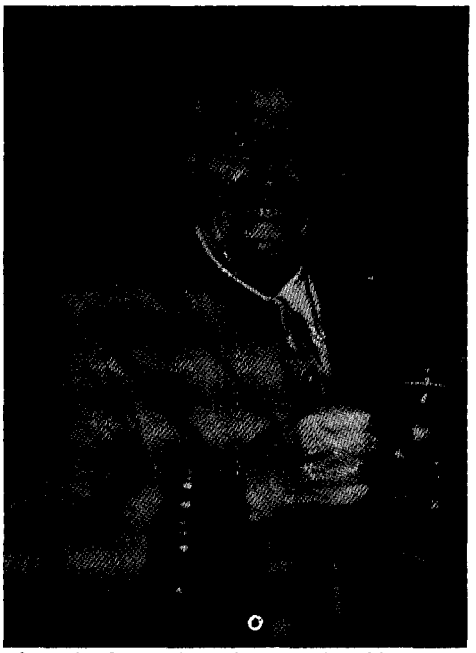
club owner Jack Ruby. At the same moment, Helms was delivering Whitten's preliminary finding — that Oswald had acted alone—to President Lyndon Johnson. Whitten's investigation continued—for the next couple of weeks, he and a staff of 30 worked almost around the clock, doggedly plowing through C.I.A. cables from all over the world, scouring for new information. He forwarded the most interesting material to the White House, under Helms's name. He drafted a report on what the C.I.A. knew about Oswald and began circulating drafts to the various offices in the operations directorate that had tracked Oswald at one point or another. Nothing he learned in these first few weeks changed Whitten's original assessment, that Oswald had shot President Kennedy without anyone else's help or command.



After only a few weeks on the case, John Whitten was taken off the CIA's investigation of JFK's assassination.

But in the first days of December, Whitten abruptly learned that Helms had not been providing him all of the agency's available files on Oswald. On Dec. 6, he and a colleague went to the White House to read a report the F.B.I. had been preparing on Oswald. When he finished, he walked out into the cold sunny morning, feeling stunned: The bureau, he realized, possessed information about Oswald's past political activities that Helms had known but had never shared with him. "Oswald's involvement with the pro-Castro movement in the United States was not at all surfaced to us [meaning him and his staff] in the first weeks of the investigation," he later told investigators.

At a meeting soon after Dec. 6, Whitten complained to Helms and James Angleton, the chief of counter-intelligence staff, who outranked even Helms. Oswald's involvement with pro-Castro groups, he argued, made his initial conclusions "completely irrelevant." Analytically, Whitten had a point. Bureaucratically, he was out of line. Angleton, a pinched, brainy alcoholic who was responsible for keeping track of American defectors to the U.S.S.R. including Oswald, quickly concluded that Cuba was unimportant to the investigation, and decided to focus his inquiry narrowly on his own theories about Oswald's life in the Soviet Union.

Whitten felt sandbagged when Helms turned the Oswald investigation over to Angleton. Helms told him his services would no longer be needed, and Whitten was sent back to his Latin America duties. His ideas for investigating Oswald's Cuban connections were abandoned.

The secrets Dick Helms kept

What Whitten didn't know was that Helms's reluctance to investigate Oswald's connection to the pro-Castro movement had little to do with unraveling the Kennedy assassination—and a lot to do with hiding the potentially embarrassing performance of Helms's top anti-Castro operatives in regards to Oswald. In the 12 weeks prior to Nov. 22, the agency had been keeping tabs on the man who would later assassinate the president. In August, Oswald had tried to insinuate himself into the ranks of the anti-Castro Cuban Student Directorate, then turned around and started handing out pamphlets for the Fair Play for Cuba Committee. What the C.I.A. failed to disclose for more than 30 years was that the Directorate's leaders in Miami were receiving $25,000 a month at the time. As I reported in the *Miami New Times* two years ago, an undercover agency officer working for Helms named George Joannides was guiding and monitoring the group's activities at the time of its contacts with Oswald.

In September, one of the agency's Latin American operatives had stood in line next to Oswald in New Orleans as he applied for a visa to travel to Mexico City where, two weeks later, Oswald visited the Cuban consulate. His arrival there was recorded by C.I.A. photo and audio surveillance teams reporting to a highly-regarded career officer named David Atlee Phillips, perhaps Helms's most accomplished protégé. Reports of Oswald's presence in Mexico City went back to Langley, where they were reviewed by Helms's top aide, Tom Karamessines. Had the agency's investigation of Oswald proceeded the way Whitten wanted, the accused assassin's connections to Cuba would have been fully reviewed, forcing the agency to account, at least internally, for what Joannides, Phillips, and Karamessines knew about Oswald.

Helms may have also feared that having John Whitten running loose in the C.I.A. files might expose his ongoing effort to arrange Castro's assassination. Under Helms's direction, C.I.A. agents had been encouraging Rolando Cubela, a charismatic young commandante who had come to power with Castro in 1959 but had later become disillusioned, to consider simply killing Castro himself. Cubela was an important asset at the heart of the Cuban government, memorably code-named AMLASH. On the day Kennedy was killed, Helms had sent an aide to bring a pen, fixed to deliver deadly poison, to Cubela in Paris. Even after Kennedy was dead, Helms continued to pursue Castro's murder. He did not call off the AMLASH plot.

Whether Helms actually punished Whitten for attempting to pursue the Oswald investigation, we cannot tell; Whitten's job evaluation from 1963 remains classified. But in the following years, while Helms went on to become Director of Central Intelligence, Whitten's career stalled. In 1965, he was kicked sideways into an unimportant job reviewing

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operations. He would not get a senior position, but his brilliance could not be denied. In 1970, he was awarded the Distinguished Intelligence medal, the agency's highest honor. He retired and moved his family to Vienna, where he pursued a new career as a singer.

There he found refuge in the calmer glories of Johann Strauss. Whitten became the first American to be accepted into the Vienna Men's Choral Society, the venerable singing group whose New Year's concerts are televised around the world. On concert nights, he sang first tenor. In his free time, he served as tour director. Gerhard Track, director of the society and a close friend of Whitten's, told me that Whitten had wished to leave his life in America behind and never spoke about his espionage work. An honest bureaucrat, Whitten had stumbled into the middle of perhaps the greatest scandal related to one of the most momentous events in American history, but he never sought to rat on the institution which had shunted him aside. Neither a conspiracy theorist nor an apologist, he remained loyal to Langley.

The spy who sang

The agency's dossier on Oswald, which Whitten had tried to draw upon, would of course leak out anyway over the next two decades, tarnishing both the agency and Helms's reputation. In 1973, President Richard Nixon, mistrusting Helms's role in the Watergate burglary scandal, forced him out of the director's chair. Details about Helms's role in the assassination plots began to leak out. In May 1976, the C.I.A. connection with Rolando Cubela became public knowledge. With public outrage running high, Congress sliced the agency's budget and reined in its activities. The Justice Department indicted Helms for misleading lawmakers about the agency's part in overthrowing a leftist government in Chile. In 1978, Congress reopened the JFK investigation.

Whitten reluctantly returned from self-imposed exile to testify in secret session. As a former senior official who had once enjoyed access to virtually all of the agency's files on Oswald, he greatly interested the House Select Committee on Assassinations (HSCA). On May 16, 1978, two investigators and a stenographer recorded seven hours of Whitten's testimony about what he knew of the agency's Oswald investigation.

At the beginning, Whitten raised his right hand and swore to tell the truth. When asked to give his name, he replied, "John Scelso," which had been a code name he used in C.I.A. cables. But his testimony was remarkably candid. A less self-confident man might have minced his words. Not John Whitten. He sang.

Asked whether he thought Helms had acted properly by failing to disclose the Cubela plot to the Warren Commission, Whitten replied, "No. I think that was a morally highly reprehensible act, which he cannot possibly justify under his oath of office or any other standard of professional service."

Whitten said that he believed Oswald was a "pro-Castro nut," but he was aware of no evidence that Oswald had conspired with others. Yet he added that Helms had thwarted two important lines of inquiry: Oswald's Cuba-related activities and the AMLASH/Cubela imbroglio. Had he known about the latter, Whitten said he would have polygraphed Cubela, which might have put to rest suspicions that the malcontent commandante could have been Castro's double agent. Had he not been kept in the dark by Helms, Whitten said he would also have taken the investigation to the C.I.A. station in Miami, preempting decades worth of public speculation about what C.I.A. officials knew about Oswald and when they knew it.

Had Whitten been permitted to follow these leads to their logical conclusions, and had that information been included in the Warren Commission report, that report would have enjoyed more credibility with the public. Instead, Whitten's secret testimony strengthened the HSCA's scathing critique of the C.I.A.'s half-hearted investigation of Oswald. The HSCA concluded that Kennedy had been killed by Oswald and unidentifiable co-conspirators.

The insistence of the C.I.A. that all of the records of the HSCA investigation be kept secret for 50 years stoked more suspicion and cleared the way for Oliver Stone's 1991 movie *JFK*, which portrayed the assassination as the work of high-level C.I.A. and Pentagon conspirators. The Washington press corps ripped Stone for taking liberties with the historical record. But polls show that the general public found his interpretation of Kennedy's death more believable than the government's.

The loss of investigatory nerve that first showed in John Whitten's reassignment culminated in permanent damage to the credibility of the U.S. government.

Until death do you declassify

In 1996, Whitten's 192-page deposition was finally declassified by the Assassination Records Review Board, an independent civilian panel created by Congress after the "JFK" furor. The board's chairman, federal judge John Tunheim, describes the deposition as "one of the most important" new JFK records. At Whitten's request, however, the board did not then declassify his true name. Whitten died in a Pottstown, Pa., nursing home in January 2000.

Whitten's nemesis survived him. In retirement, Richard Helms lived quietly in Washington's Foxhall neighborhood, his number listed in the phone book. He had worked off the notoriety of the 1970s during the Reagan years when his hard-line posture became more fashionable and his legal troubles were forgotten. He was a fixture on the social circuit, attending events at the Kennedy Center and lunching with friends at the Sulgrave Club in Foggy Bottom, steadily working to rehabilitate his reputation with selected historians and journalists.

Helms never deigned to discuss "John Scelso," the C.I.A. man who spoke so critically about him. He flicked off my requests for interviews in the late 1990s with world-weary ease. When I asked him about "John Scelso," he said, perhaps truthfully, "I don't think I recall the name." Helms died at his home on Garfield Street in Washington on Oct. 22, 2002. Seven days later, the C.I.A declassified John Whitten's name. ●

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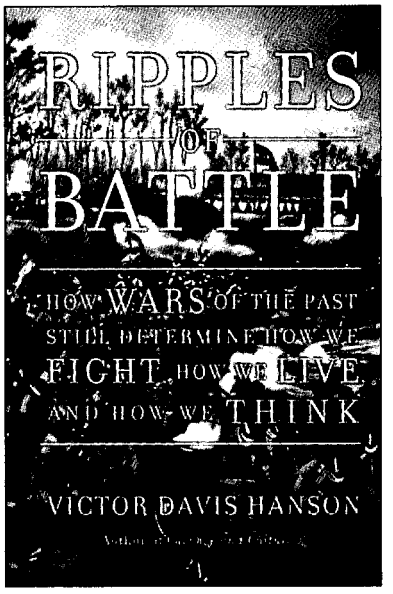
From Here to Eternity

The unintended consequences of war.

By Jon Meacham

On Tuesday, September 11, 2001, horrified by the news from the East Coast, Victor Davis Hanson began writing. A classicist and farmer in California, Hanson kept at it everyday through that momentous fall, ultimately publishing his thoughts and pieces in a small but highly influential book entitled *An Autumn of War*. The collection's overarching (and, to me, convincing) theme: that war is an inherent element of the human condition and that the wisest course in a fallen world—one in which evil can strike out at innocents, without warning, on a brilliantly blue morning, widowing spouses and orphaning children—is to appreciate the tragic quality of life. Once we accept that the world will almost always fall short of our expectations, that man is not perfectible, and that answering violence with violence is sometimes the moral thing to do, we can start to make ourselves, our children, and our culture more secure. Hanson's book was read at the highest levels of the Bush administration.

Now comes a new offering from Hanson, *Ripples of Battle*, which once again has a strong resonance with the events of the day. This book arrives in an uneasy climate, a time that seems less certain than the months after September 11. In the long run, will the war with Iraq ignite a democratic revolution in the Middle East? Or will it strengthen the deadly hand of Islamic extremists? Or will there be entirely unforeseeable consequences? After reading Hanson's book—a case study of three battles long ago—my vote is for the last of these possibilities.



Ripples of Battle: How Wars of the Past Still Determine How We Fight, How We Live, and How We Think

By Victor Davis Hanson

Doubleday, $27.50

Ripples of Battle is in some ways an even more sober book than *An Autumn of War*, and I hope that the same important people who read the first will consider the second with care. We all know about what we might call "the waves of war"—that the Civil War abolished slavery and made us one nation, and World War II conquered Nazism and unleashed the atom. Leaders who use only broad strokes to create the impression that wars unfold in neat sequences (enemy identified; enemy overthrown; energies of previously captive peoples unleashed; democracy reigns; security established), however, are not leading well. No serious person should ever try to predict what comes after a war, and in these times Americans deserve realistic and candid assessments of how hard it is to project power and build peaceful nations.

Hanson writes well, in a learned but accessible voice. "Books abound on Hannibal's encirclement at Cannae, the stealth of Arminius, Rommel's use of Panzers, or LeMay's devilish brew over Tokyo," he notes. "But rarely do we appreciate battles as human phenomena or the cumulative effects—the ripples—that change communities for years, or centuries even, well after the day's killing is over." This is not by any means an anti-war argument. It is, instead, a bracing reminder that combat and its wages, while conducted by human beings, are in the end beyond human control. "Battle is the raucous transformer of history," Hanson observes, "because it

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The unforeseen consequences of conquest: An early 19th-century political cartoon of British Prime Minister William Pitt (left) and Napoleon Bonaparte dividing up the globe.

also accelerates in a matter of minutes the usually longer play of chance, skill, and fate." If, as Winston Churchill once said, "The story of the human race is war," then Hanson is giving us a significant elaboration of the theme: that the ripples of battle are unknowable. In my reading, a key implication of Hanson's case is that insofar as they can, great war leaders should prepare their people for the unexpected. Landing on an aircraft carrier in a flight suit and standing before a banner reading "Mission Accomplished" when men and women are still under fire at the front is not preparing people for the unexpected; it is spinning them in defiance of history. Churchill, arguably the greatest war leader of all, understood this, once saying: "There is no worse mistake in public leadership than to hold out false hopes soon to be swept away. The British people can face peril or misfortune with fortitude and buoyancy, but they bitterly resent being deceived or finding that those responsible for their affairs are themselves dwelling in a fool's paradise." From his lips to President Bush's ears.

Discussing Japanese suicide attacks at the battle of Okinawa, Hanson deftly links that desperate kamikaze struggle with the ensuing 60 years. "The American navy left Okinawa convinced that warfare in the Pacific had to continue to be far more harsh and terrible than what had transpired in Europe," he writes. "They concluded that Asians in their caves, holes, and suicide ships and planes were a different—usually thought to be a more fanatical—foe than Germans or Italians, and so were deserving of even more extreme treatment. And that conjecture would have consequences in American thinking in the decades to come in the bombing campaigns ahead in Korea and especially Vietnam, where massive caves and underground fortifications were eerily reminiscent of Okinawa and likewise impregnable to occasionally mindless American carpet bombing."

The Civil War's Shiloh created a new Yankee hero, William Tecumseh Sherman, and a new Confederate one, Nathan Bedford Forrest. Sherman was struck by the sheer bravery of the Southern troops and began to realize frontal assaults were not the key to victory; there would have to be another way. "To Sherman," writes Hanson, "it was wrong to fight at Shiloh, in which his Midwesterners—themselves no abolitionists—were blasted apart while shooting down poor Southern boys who owned neither slaves nor much property. Far more humane, he grasped, was to burn the estates of the rich and the buildings of the rebel statesmen who had voted for secession; free the slaves who were critical to the Southern economy and whose enslavement had prompted the rebellion; and demonstrate that no Confederate soldier could charge the Union line with the certainty that his government and homeland far to the rear were safe from fire and ruin." Sherman may have had the humane intention of shortening the conflict by taking it to selected elite targets, but the strategy had huge unintended consequences: It alienated and infuriated Southerners for generations. On the other side of the line, Forrest won the hearts of his troops by defying orders that would have kept him on the fringes of the action. "Boys, do you hear that rattle of musketry and the roar of artillery?" he asked his soldiers. "Do you know what it means? It means that our friends and brothers are falling by hundreds at the hands of the enemy, and we are here guarding a damn creek." Galloping into the fray, and into history, Forrest became a great folk hero to ordinary Confederate fighters, and he later used that capital to found the Ku Klux Klan. The ripples from this one Tennessee battle in 1862 include, in a way, the painful war against Jim Crow and its long shadows; Richard Nixon's Southern Strategy; the fall of Trent Lott; and endless skirmishes over the Confederate battle emblem.

Hanson concludes his book with a rediscovery of the battle at Delium, in 424 B.C. The Boeotians were threatened by the Athenians. It was, according to Hanson, "perhaps the first recorded defense of the strategy of preemption—of attacking an enemy that posed a long-term rather than immediate threat ..." Pagondas, a Theban commander, spoke words that might have come

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from Donald Rumsfeld in this new century: "Furthermore, those who in confidence of their strength have a habit of attacking their neighbors, as the Athenians are doing now, are emboldened to march out against an adversary who is keeping quiet and will only defend itself inside its own land; but they are less ready to take him on when he is willing to fight outside his borders, and if opportunity arises, to strike the first blow." The point: Pagondas is making a pitch for a classical version of "shock and awe"—a tricky analogy for our times, given that Pagondas was leading a fight against the democratic Athenians.

"It is well that war is so terrible," Robert E. Lee once remarked, "or else we should grow too fond of it." Wars are indeed the way we destroy greater evils. The world is a brighter, better place today because Winston Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt led the battle against Germany and Japan; we must pray that the war on terror led by George Bush and Tony Blair—and by those who come after them—will make us and our children safer.

As Hanson's book makes clear, however, war is not what happens on a single day or in a single campaign. It is a deeper and more fundamental part of our lives, one we cannot escape. Hanson quotes Heraclitus, who 2,500 years ago observed that war is "the father, the king of us all." That is a tragic fact of life, and we should hope the men and women who are leading us at this perilous hour appreciate that battles cannot be packaged.

Meanwhile, as fervently as we hope for quick entrances and safe exits, history teaches us that wars tend to have a force and course of their own, and the more direct and honest our leaders are about that essential truth, the better off we will be.

Jon Meacham is the managing editor of *Newsweek* and a contributing editor of *The Washington Monthly*. He is the author of *Franklin and Winston: An Intimate Portrait of an Epic Friendship*.

James's Addiction

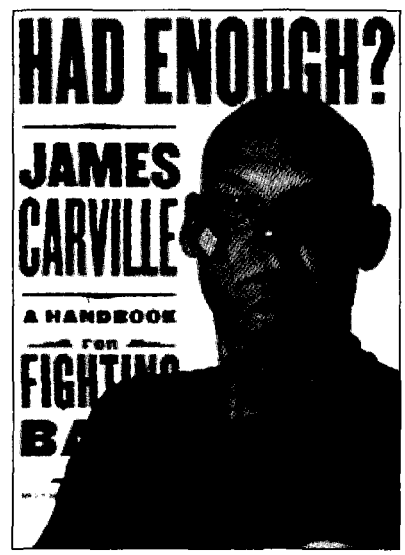
Carville can't stop giving the Democrats good advice.

By Jamie Malanowski

James Carville, a political consultant in real life who, oddly enough, also plays one on TV, has written a new book called *Had Enough? A Handbook For Fighting Back*. Apart from its cover, on which a black-eyed, band-aided yet still pugnacious Carville looks too much like a rough trade pinup boy, *Had Enough?* is a brilliant book, essential reading for anybody interested in the preservation of our democratic institutions. Nowhere in the book is his insight and acumen better demonstrated than in the passage where he advises those who share his philosophy to "arm yourself with facts and counterarguments. There are a lot of places to do this, but as far as I'm concerned, the progressive must-read is a magazine called *The Washington Monthly*." Well said, Mr. Carville!

Now, while my editor goes out to buy some marble and a chisel, I will continue with the review.

Carville's greatest claim to fame, of course, is that he was Bill Clinton's campaign manager in 1992, a year when at first it seemed that the greatest stature a Democratic nominee could hope to achieve was to be the answer to a medium-hard "Jeopardy" question. Instead, Clinton was able to attack the first President Bush by



Had Enough? A Handbook for Fighting Back
By James Carville
Simon & Schuster, $23.00

framing issues in ways that made it seem that Clinton was in touch with our problems, and that Bush either didn't care, or was their author. So armed, Clinton smote the incumbent. It didn't hurt that the country was swaying through the aftershocks of a recession; but please recall that four years earlier when there were reasons to think that the Democrats were due for a victory, they responded to these favorable auguries by nominating Mr. Competence, not Mr. Ideology, and lost.

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Clinton talked so much in that campaign that it is difficult to believe he was ever scripted; still, his ability to discuss issues and Carville's knack for framing them surely complemented one another. Reading *Had Enough?*, one can't help hearing the arguments made not in Carville's Cajun accent, but in Clinton's husky drawl. It's like looking at the sheet music of a song written by Cole Porter or Jerome Kern, and hearing Sinatra singing it in your head. One wonders what the 2004 political landscape would look like if a virtuoso candidate like Clinton were in the field, equipped with Carville's arrangements. Whatever virtues the Democratic candidates possess, when it comes to selling an issue, none of them is even Jerry Vale.

Had Enough? is a handbook for Democrats, one that can be used everywhere, from classrooms and church socials to the sets of the Fox News Network and beyond, yea onto the very campaign trail itself. It's interesting that he lards the book with homespun stories of his upbringing in Louisiana, because his philosophy of politics and government is very much a community-based approach writ large. Carville's public persona is that of a tough, sarcastic, combative, high-stakes sharpie, but underneath, he is really that familiar mainstay of most communities, the volunteer fireman, PTA member, money raiser for the new Little League field.

Carville's approach—his doctrine and battle plan—is let's be fair, let's look out for the little guy, and let's roll up our sleeves and chip in some money to invest in a better tomorrow: It's a useful approach for people who want to be Democratic standard-bearers. In most of the elections of the last quarter century, the American public has elected the man whom they could envision comfortably explaining policy in the local barbershop, and not the pointy-headed intellectual or sharp Washington insider (or, in the case of some recent Democratic nominees, both).

The most interesting aspect of this book, then, is not how many arguments Carville throws against Republican positions, but the number of these arguments that are in fact attacks on big business. On issues involving health care, energy, the environment, tort reform, and taxes, Carville criticizes Republican positions because they protect and defend business practices that are not fair, don't look out for the little guy, and give to rich people the resources that could be used to invest in a better tomorrow. "Today corporations are the great threat to citizen power," Carville writes. "They have the ability to abuse employees, shareholders, customers, neighbors and the environment. The only force powerful enough to stop that abuse is government, which is why rich people and corporations want to shrink our government or own it. Republicans are helping them do both."

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This is something new: a harsher tone, and a more explicit critique of business. The years since the election of Ronald Reagan have been strongly pro-business. Taxes have been cut, free trade has been promoted, and the growth of pension funds and 401(k) plans have turned millions of people into shareholders. Business executives, starting with Lee Iacocca and Ted Turner, enjoyed a new kind of celebrity; some, like Steve Jobs, were even hip. Both political parties cast themselves as pro-business: the Republicans by nature, the Democrats out of the realization that they had strayed too far into anti-business positions and needed to adapt. Bill Clinton and Al Gore specifically ran as pro-business New Democrats.

Had Enough? perhaps signals the birth of the New New Democrat, —pro-business, sure, but not wacky about it. For a long time, people swallowed painful business practices like corporate takeovers and downsizing, having convinced themselves that such ruthless steps promoted a more competitive business environment that was better for everybody in the long run. Now, in the wake of the shocking business scandals, Bush's massive tax giveaways, his vice president's secret energy-policy meetings, and our parents buying medicine in Manitoba, even people who are happy to have a good job and a fattening 401(k) plan may conclude that things have gone too far. For decades Republicans have had great success convincing people who like government but who are concerned about its power and profligacy to vote for a party that wants less of it. Maybe New New Democrats will aim to pull off a similar trick with business, and convince voters who'd love to be rich to vote for a party that aims to check the corporate class's reflexive selfishness. Already these sentiments are filtering into the campaign. "We want a country that is not simply run for the benefit of the corporations," Howard Dean said recently. "We want a country that ordinary Americans can have some confidence that it is being run for them and their benefit." Perhaps Howard has seen a review copy of *Had Enough?*

If 2004 is going to be like 1992, this will probably be a pretty good game plan. As it is, it might not have any effect at all. The key issues remain the war and security, which are Bush's to win or lose. But if James Carville is right, one of these days, even if Bush's crusades are triumphant, things will have gone too far, and the business party will get served with a bill.

Jamie Malanowski is a New York writer.

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Gubernatorial Goldrush

Why the Terminator is no Gipper.

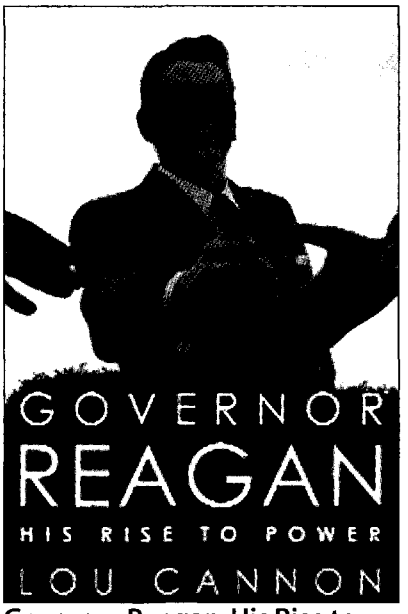
By Jonathan Rowe

Next to being sued by Bill O'Reilly, one of the best things that could happen to the author of a political biography is for the story to play out again just as the book is going on sale. That's what happened to Lou Cannon regarding this new biography of a Hollywood actor who becomes Republican governor of California.

Cannon's good fortune is ours as well. Without the Davis recall, *Governor Reagan* would have been mainly of historical interest. Now, considering that Schwarzenegger has named Reagan as his model, it becomes a divining rod for what lies ahead.

The book also is a pleasure. Cannon has covered Reagan since his first campaign for governor in 1966, and the result is biography that often approaches memoir. Cannon is present but not intrusive, a trickier task than one might think (vide Edmund Morris's *Dutch*). He clearly likes Reagan; and it speaks to Cannon's fairness of mind that, seeing through his eyes, we come to like Reagan, too.

Yet Cannon is clear-eyed on Reagan's failings—his disengagement both mental and emotional, for example, and his tendency to be led by staff. Cannon does not hide his differences on policy either. These observations cut deep because he does not make them with relish—a lesson the writers of CBS' aborted and (according to reports) sophomoric biopic of Reagan apparently never learned. But probably the most interesting thing about *Governor Reagan* at this moment is the light it sheds on the character who looms offstage—Arnold Schwarzenegger.



Governor Reagan: His Rise to Power
By Lou Cannon
Public Affairs, $30.00

The symmetry is indeed uncanny. Republican actor issues forth from the moneyed precincts of Southern California, promising to unshackle enterprise from the stifling grip of government, and sporting a perennial tan. Candidate is dismissed as a mere (and mediocre) actor who lacks experience for the job, yet defeats an unpopular Democrat beset by fiscal woes. Nationally, Democrats pick up vague seismic forebodings which they hope will go away.

But does Arnold's election really continue the nation's move to the right that Reagan helped to start? Not likely. Reagan congealed the Republican Party's rightward flank at a time when its Washington establishment tended toward the center. Now Schwarzenegger could do the opposite, and provide a counterweight to the party's new hard-right tilt.

The strange part is, he could do this even as he follows the example of Governor Reagan that Lou Cannon has portrayed.

For all the similarities of story line, Ronald Reagan and Arnold Schwarzenegger are very different. When Reagan was first elected, someone asked him how he would govern. "I don't know," Reagan replied, "I've never played a governor before." He was joking but also not joking, Cannon observes. Reagan was a true actor who found himself emotionally in the roles he inhabited. Offstage he was a kind man who tended to be inattentive to what was going on around him. "When advisor Martin Anderson, exiled from Reagan's entourage because of a staff purge that the candidate ignored, rejoined the Presidential campaign after a long absence," Cannon writes, "he sensed that Reagan was happy to have him back without quite knowing he had been away."

Cannon's Reagan was entirely capable of tuning out an Iran-Contra scandal. His son Michael said that he often was "completely oblivious" to others. Reagan's guardedness in life probably was connected to his extraordinary ability to nestle into the public mind—to be to people in general what he could not be to people in particular.

But Reagan was not the dummy that his critics assume. He was a

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shrewd politician with a strong internal compass and a fine ear for audience. *Governor Reagan* suggests that state government brought out the best in him, since it made him grapple with the concrete in a way that Washington did not. The results could be surprising. Early in his first term, for example, Reagan signed the largest tax increase in California history. The corporate tax rate doubled, and the top individual rate went from 7 to 11 percent, making it possible to balance the budget without cutting funds for schools. It also got rid of the unpleasantness three years before the next election.

Reagan also signed what was then the most liberal abortion bill in the country. (Nancy Reagan's father, a retired surgeon, favored such a loosening.) Determined to show he could govern, Reagan compromised with California's Democratic legislature, and got as good as he gave. That's part of Schwarzenegger's model.

So, too, is an environmental record that in retrospect is amazing. It was Ronald Reagan—yes, Ronald Reagan—who stopped a big highway project in the Sierras that would have cut the John Muir Trail in half. It was Ronald Reagan who stopped a major dam on the Eel River that would have wiped out a beautiful valley and an Indian settlement. "We've broken too many damn treaties," he said.

Reagan helped create the Redwood National Forest and added 145,000 acres to the state park system, along with two ocean preserves. How could this be the same politician who a decade later would sic James Watt on the nation's wilderness and prairies?

The answer says much about Reagan and how he governed. Reagan had an affinity for the out of doors since his boyhood in Dixon, Ill. He loved riding horseback on his California ranch. But these emotions were latent, like those he brought to his movie parts. They required a director, and in Sacramento that was Ike Livermore, Reagan's secretary of resources.

Reagan didn't actually choose Livermore. Tom Reed, Reagan's appointments secretary, did. Livermore worked for a timber company, but he also was an ardent outdoorsman and a friend of David Brower, an environmental icon. Reagan liked Livermore because he came from business and rode horseback. Livermore understood Reagan and how to appeal to his conservationist instincts.

To engage Reagan in the fight against the Sierra highway, for example, Livermore arranged a backpack trip on horseback to see the affected area. It didn't hurt that such projects were darlings of Reagan's predecessor, Edmund "Pat" Brown, a New Deal Democrat for whom progress was practically synonymous with concrete. Protecting nature became a happy offshoot of stopping Big Government.

So what about James Watt, Reagan's first interior secretary who never saw a prairie he didn't want to pave? Reagan didn't really choose Watt either; he came by way of Sen. Paul Laxalt of Nevada, a close advisor. Reagan did not set out to be a bulldozer man. He simply didn't pay a lot of attention, since he was more concerned with taxes and the Soviet Union, which fit directly into the larger ideological drama in which he saw himself cast.

Photos from Ronald Reagan Library (left); Getty Images

Future Golden State governors: Ronald Reagan (left), a former Lowell Park lifeguard; Arnold Schwarzenegger, formerly in the role of "Conan the Barbarian."

Exercising power

At the personal level, Arnold Schwarzenegger is cut from different cloth. There is a hard, industrial quality to his ambition; he pumped his way to celebrity with chemicals and iron. Where Reagan came to Hollywood to be a star, with Schwarzenegger, power and money seem a larger part of the equation. He has a good business mind and does not hesitate to throw his weight around. His acting roles have been celebrity vehicles. Where Reagan found himself in parts, Schwarzenegger's parts find themselves in him.

Whatever else this means, I suspect that Schwarzenegger will be

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Photos from Ronald Reagan Library (left); Getty Images

Roadside attractions: Billboard for Reagan's gubernatorial campaign in 1966; Schwarznegger's campaign bus in 2003

on top of things in a way that Reagan generally was not. Reagan wanted to preside; Schwarzenegger, I think, will enjoy the exercise of power. Less emotionally guarded with individuals, he has less of Reagan's ability to project himself emotionally into the popular psyche. More engaged in the day-to-day, he will have less ability to deflect criticism, though celebrity has Teflon of its own. And Arnold, for all his corporate boosting, just might be a little less gauzy-eyed about the market in the abstract. People who actually engage in business tend to be less romantic about it than are ideologues for whom it is a personal psychodrama.

The Great Inoculator

Cannon's Reagan was not a man to inflict pain or harm. It is impossible to imagine him making piggish advances towards women—or anyone else—as Arnold has done. Arnold is known in the movie business as someone who is charming to peers, but not always to folks who work "below the line." The Hitler talk in the campaign was desperate and silly. But since his days as a body-builder Arnold has shown a tendency to dominate and inflict humiliation that suggests a shadow region in his psyche that Reagan simply did not have.

My guess is that Arnold will keep that side under tight control and perhaps even bend the other way to compensate. Like Reagan, he'll have his Hollywood experience in projecting visual images of compassion and command. His policies seem quite close to those of Governor Reagan. Most likely, he will make a deal with the legislative Democrats on taxes, as Reagan did, and then blame it on the wastrel Dems. The public will forgive. He has little interest in the right-wing moral agenda, just as Reagan did not.

On the environment, Arnold seems quite strong. His platform calls for half of new homes in California to be solar by 2005, and a 50-percent cut in air pollution by an unspecified date. He wants "hydrogen highways" throughout the state to hasten a transition to non-polluting cars. He has appointed a bona fide environmentalist to his top environment job—and unlike Reagan, he knows what he is getting.

What's different is cultural. Reagan emerged politically as a reaction to the '60s. His first political role was that of a stern father figure who put his foot down over the excesses at Berkeley. This was a defining drama for the right-wing psyche, much the way resistance to porcine Southern sheriffs became a fixture in the psyche of the left. It provided a bridge between the corporate free-marketers and the moral authoritarians who define the poles of the Republican Party. Reagan himself was, in Hendrick Hertzberg's apt phrase, a "closet tolerant." But his stern father role offered a kind of Rorschach onto which the moralist right could project its views without Reagan actually holding them.

Schwarzenegger provides no such bridge. As *The Economist* has pointed out, Arnold was a part of the '60s that Reagan defined himself against. His was the lifestyle '60s as opposed to the political '60s, but the '60s still. He ingested many chemicals and slept in many beds. One reason the eleventh-hour groping charges didn't stick was that Arnold never has pretended to be a paragon, or pointed the finger at anyone else. Henceforth, it will be harder for Republicans to bed- or drug-bait Democrats. The Terminator might indeed become the Inoculator; which is one reason the Republican right in California hasn't embraced him.

Reagan spoke to the parents of the Baby Boomers, Arnold to Boomers themselves. In California, this is not the worst place for a Republican to be: pro-business and anti-tax, but laissez-faire on gender and lifestyle as well, and strong on the environment. For Democrats, it is not good news. It means potential loss of two of their strongest trump cards. Of course, Arnold has to show that he can stand his ground on the environment despite his corporate boosterism, which is no easy task. He also has to find a way to court the social conservatives in his own party who voted against him in the recall. That won't be easy either.

There's no question that a Republican governor in California softens up the state for Bush. But for the president, Schwarzenegger is a

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mixed blessing. His bright new Republican star is climbing at the very moment that Bush's is losing luster. Yes, Schwarzenegger needs federal help with his state's gaping budget deficit. But politically, Bush needs him more than he needs the president—not a comfortable place for Bush to be.

Most importantly, Schwarzenegger's politics could serve as a foil to Bush's—from the Republican side. His live-and-let-live social views show Bush's Southern strategy for what it is, while his strong stands for the environment—on paper at least—highlight the toadying of Bush and Cheney to their friends in the oil industry et al.

With their new action hero supporting gay rights and choice, it becomes harder for Republicans to savage Democrats who hold those views. And his promotion of solar homes and green buildings makes it harder for Republicans to cast such things as threats to jobs and growth. Nationally, as in California, a lot of Americans agree with him. But for the ruling clique in Washington that claims the mantle of Ronald Reagan, it is not the Gipper II they probably had in mind.

Jonathan Rowe is a contributing editor of *The Washington Monthly.*

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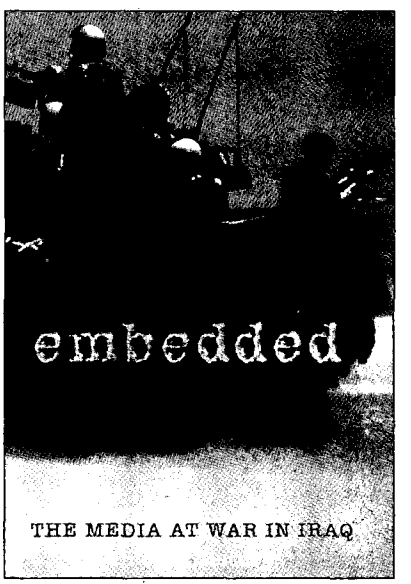
Embed Cred

How close is too close for embedded reporters?

By Nicholas Kulish

It must have taken all of 10 minutes after I showed up at Ali Al Salem air base in Kuwait for word to filter back stateside that HMLA-267 (a Marine light attack helicopter squadron) was being covered by *The Wall Street Journal*, as represented by yours truly. The support networks between military families are very sophisticated and Internet-savvy. My articles quickly raced through email groups. But the messages I received were rarely about the stories. The Marines were cut off from email shortly before the invasion began. Instead it was personal. "Is my husband okay?" "Say hello to Bob." "Can you tell me how he's doing?" "Is everyone safe?" "Please give him a hug for me." I wasn't sure what would have happened if I'd tried to give a macho Cobra helicopter pilot a hug, so I didn't follow through on that one, but a lot of the other messages were answered and greetings passed on. I sometimes felt like the squadron's designated Red Cross representative.

The American public was inundated with the coverage of the Iraq conflict, but the pressures inherent in the relationship between the military and the 600-odd journalists who covered them, were little explored. We were trying to serve our readers, listeners, and audience without endangering the troops. We wanted to make friends without losing perspective and transmit information using sandstorm-befouled equipment as we bumped along together toward Baghdad.



Embedded: The Media at War in Iraq

By Bill Katovsky and Timothy Carlson

$23.95, The Lyons Press

Bill Katovsky, a former researcher at the Brookings Institution, and Timothy Carlson, a former staff writer for the *Los Angles Herald Examiner*, have written *Embedded: The Media at War in Iraq*. It is a work of oral history based on interviews with 61 people who were involved in covering the war, from photographers and military public-affairs officers, to drivers and fighting soldiers, even a peace activist. The introductions can be clunky, especially some failed attempts at humor, but they are short and only meant to provide context.

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The book may not automatically appeal to the average reader because journalists like to talk shop. But anyone interested in the profession or firsthand experience of the war would be well served by picking it up.

The book illuminates the differences between the demands of diverse types of news organizations. For newspaper reporters, the job meant a story once or twice a day. For television, it was about overcoming the enormous technical hurdles of near constant broadcasting. After returning to the States, I was particularly jealous of Evan Wright, embedded with a Marine recon team for *Rolling Stone* magazine, who had the luxury of waiting until he got back to write three long, fantastic articles about his experience. Not only did he have the time to construct a coherent and almost artistic narrative, but also he was writing for a publication willing to print the unexpurgated musings of the Marines. It is almost impossible to quote a Marine without colorful cuss words three or four times in each sentence, and without that cursing their iterations feel bowdlerized and false. Wright could include the homoerotic joking, their violent fantasies and even their discussions of bowel movements. None of this would have been suitable for *The Wall Street Journal*'s readers over their morning coffee and cereal.

From a personal angle, it was nice to know that I was not the only fool who contracted a foot infection in the miniature swamps of my sealed, rubber chem-bio boots. And neither was I alone in having both serious nightmares before the war and none whatsoever during it, if only due to perpetual exhaustion.

The embed system gave rise to a series of complaints by journalism critics and journalists themselves. Reporters agreed not to disclose certain types of information like the location of military units or plans for future operations, and commanders could impose embargoes—blackout periods such as at the very start of the ground war. But such limits don't seem unreasonable in time of war, and in my experience never seriously got in the way of my reporting what I thought was important. Moreover, the embed system must be judged in comparison with the likely alternatives. Take, for instance, the first Gulf War: In 1991, most of the information was pumped out of official stations of the Pentagon either in the Middle East or in Washington. To the extent that it wasn't was much to the credit of independent reporters like the late Michael Kelly, who roved the war zone on his own in that conflict. (It is a sad irony that Kelly was killed in this recent conflict as an embedded journalist with the Army's Third Infantry Division.)

Photo courtesy of The Lyons Press

Breakfast embed

Another major criticism of the embed coverage in practice was that it provided a scattershot view of the war, narrative slices so fine that they provided no context or bigger picture. But that critique overlooks the fact that most news organizations compiled their coverage of the war from a variety of sources: embeds and independent journalists filing reports from Baghdad, Kuwait, Jordan, and the Kurdish-controlled territories in Northern Iraq, as well as researchers, editors, and bureau chiefs working in domestic offices to compile articles or broadcasts. The *Journal*, for instance, wove together coverage from embeds, from the Pentagon's briefing centers in Qatar and Washington and unilaterals converging from numerous directions. That was more than some papers, perhaps, but fewer than other major dailies and certainly as much as wire services like the AP and 24-hour news channels. Indeed, one of the book's greatest shortcomings is that it focuses so much on the experiences of individual reporters as to lose sight of the fact that most of us were operating as parts of much larger teams. Even one interview with a bureau chief would have shed significant light on what it was like to try to make sense of irregular field reports without losing sight of other organizations' reporting in the war's 24-hour news cycle.

A third criticism of the embed system is that it led to a blurring of the border between reporter and soldier; that in practice, the reporters became too close to the troops to write critically or objectively. That accusation also cuts directly against my own experiences. Though the other reporters and I ate with the troops, slept next to them, and endured hostile fire alongside them, we were professionals, military personnel, and correspondents alike. I can't count the number of times I apologized for an invasive question and heard, "You have to do your job," back from a Marine. In reading CNN and *Time* medical correspondent Dr. Sanjay Gupta's

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words about operating on a two-year-old child with severe head injuries, it is difficult to comprehend that he was criticized for trying to save a dying child because it somehow compromised his journalistic detachment. There were also those who derided the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*'s Ron Martz for helping a medic treat two wounded soldiers and an Iraqi civilian. He told the editors of this book, "There is blood everywhere as Schafer falls back. His blood is not squirting in the air; it's just flowing out of his head ... I'm in the corner, kind of trapped by Schafer, who's laying on top of me and my legs are caught up underneath some of the equipment." One wonders what kind of person doesn't help a gunshot victim lying on top of him or her, Iraqi or American or Senegalese, much less someone they've shared a ride and every meal with for a month. Wherever he or she is, I wouldn't want that person working with me. Katovsky and Carlson tracked down Pfc. Don Schafer recuperating at home. "He kept telling me that I'd be okay, because I kept telling him how tired I was," Schafer recalls. For those who call the media anti-military, it is worth noting just how much respect many of the journalists felt for the soldiers they covered.

In the end, the war was far too short to be a test of the embed program. Over another six months or six years, the quality of the journalism it produced would have been easier to judge.

When I contemplate the success or failure of the embed program, I think about those briefings in Qatar, at the Pentagon's press office, not the numbing recitation from the podium, but those moments when a questioner, with a newspaper or television transcript clutched in one hand, refuted a bit of stilted Pentagonese by saying, "But an embed with the 3rd I.D." or "an embed with the 1st Marine Division reported..." And that's why we were there.

Nicholas Kulish was embedded with one of the Marine Expeditionary Force's helicopter squadrons for *The Wall Street Journal*.

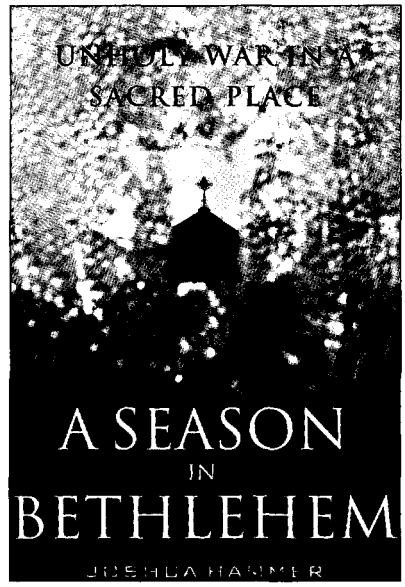
Oh Little Town

The mean streets of Bethlehem

By Barbara Demick

In an unguarded moment, Joshua Hammer's translator blurts out an astonishing description of his fellow Palestinian Christians. "We are like the Jews in Fiddler on the Roof; we are living inside a ghetto," he tells Hammer. It is surprising to hear a Palestinian identifying himself with Jews; but this is Bethlehem, a city where many of the assumptions about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are turned on their heads. The world that Hammer depicts so eloquently in *A Season in Bethlehem* is about nothing so simple as Arab versus Jew, or Muslim versus Christian. This portrait of Palestinian life in Bethlehem reveals a complex, fragmented society populated by sometimes heroic, sometimes murderous personalities who struggle as much with themselves as with the Israeli enemy. The first murder in the book is between cousins—the victim is a woman who has offended her clan with an adulterous affair and is shot in an honor killing. It is clear from the get-go that there will be many layers to the onion that Hammer is about to peel.

The biblical birthplace of Jesus Christ is one of the few places on the West Bank that still has a sizeable Christian population, with many of the Christians living in the shadows of the Church of the Nativity, built over the reputed site of the manger. The Palestinian Christians are for the most part multilingual, private-school-educated, and property-owning. They are also victims of their own



A Season in Bethlehem: Unholy War in a Sacred Place
By Joshua Hammer
Free Press, $24.00

success, their ranks thinned by generations of emigration to the Americas and Europe. They fret less about the Israelis at their doorstep than the growing population of Muslims, who have become the majority in Bethlehem after being displaced in the 1948 and 1967 wars with Israel. The old Christian businessmen zealously guard their right to ban Muslims from their private club where they retreat to drink alcohol and play bingo. The Palestinian Christian translator, Samir Zedan, who is one of many fascinating presences in this book, tells Hammer he would rather his son marry an Israeli Jew than a Palestinian Muslim. Many grumble openly that Bethlehem was better off

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under the Israeli occupation than under Yasser Arafat's Palestinian self-rule. For the Palestinian Christians, Hammer writes, "the game was about survival, about negotiating a path of least resistance between the Israelis on one side, Muslims on the other."

At the other extreme of Palestinian society is the extended Abayat family, descendants of nomadic Bedouin who have established roots around Bethlehem. Thugs and car thieves in the eyes of Bethlehem society, the Abayats were elevated to the top of the heap with the coming of the second Intifada, the uprising against Israel that began in 2000. As leaders of the al Aqsa "Martyrs Brigade," they swagger through Manger Square in front of the Church of the Nativity with their M-16s and Kalashnikovs, scaring away Palestinians and tourists alike. They extort money from Christian businessmen. The most compelling portrait in the book is of militia leader Atef Abayat, a James Dean-type with a shock of hair over his forehead and an L&M filter cigarette dangling from his lips. Abayat is a self-styled godfather, who can be homicidal one moment and sweetly generous the next. Hammer depicts a man who spends hours at his rooftop aviary with a collection of doves, canaries, finches, and lovebirds, cleaning their cages, clipping their wings, and even singing to them. Yet in a particularly chilling scene, Abayat plays a card game in which the loser is obliged to kill an Israeli soldier. When Abayat loses the game, he walks calmly to a rooftop overlooking a nearby Jewish shrine and pumps two bullets into the chest of a 19-year-old private walking back to his compound.

Bethlehem is one of the weirder places on the planet. The gloomy churches, the religious kitsch in the souvenir shops, the storybook quality of the name and the underlying tragedy of the Israel-Palestinian conflict all make Bethlehem a popular dateline for foreign correspondents. The city is located just outside of Jerusalem, which has one of the biggest number of foreign correspondents in the world. As a result, it is hard to find any Bethlehem resident who hasn't been interviewed by a journalist. But somehow Hammer, the *Newsweek* correspondent in Jerusalem, has gotten deeper into place than anyone else. He seems never to cease chipping away at the layers of façade. This is a world drawn in many nuanced shades of gray, where one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter. Hammer refrains from making judgment calls about right and wrong and is honest enough to admit he often cannot tell the difference. "I found myself whipsawed back and forth in my reactions," he writes. "Talking to Israeli soldiers and civilians, I could fully understand their anger and frustration ... But whenever I traveled to Bethlehem or other cities in the West Bank and felt the sullen rage and despondency of people shut indoors for days on end, or talked to family members of innocent civilians who had been shot dead for violating curfews, I was yanked back in the other direction."

The last third of the book is devoted to the 39-day siege of the Church of the Nativity in April and May of 2002. It is a grand finale in which the worlds of the Muslims and Christians collide in the epic setting of the basilica. With the Israeli army in hot pursuit, the bedraggled Palestinian guerrillas take refuge amid the ancient limestone columns and gilded icons, using crates of new church bells sent by the Pope to block the doors. At the very end, Hammer goes to Spain to follow the Palestinian guerrilla leader into exile as part of a deal brokered by the European Union to end the siege. This is Ibrahim Abayat, who becomes commander of the "Martyrs' Brigade" after Atef Abayat is assassinated by the Israelis. By now, we're familiar with Ibrahim; he, in fact, was the Abayat who was responsible for the honor killing of his cousin, a mother of six, and of countless killings of Israelis. In an ironic ending after the death of so many, the murderous Ibrahim ends up in cushy exile in a hunting lodge as a guest of the Spanish government, chain-smoking Marlboros and watching the continuing drama of the Intifada on television.

Barbara Demick was *The Philadelphia Inquirer's* Jerusalem correspondent for four years. She is now Seoul bureau chief for the *Los Angeles Times*.

COLD WARRIORS AT HOME

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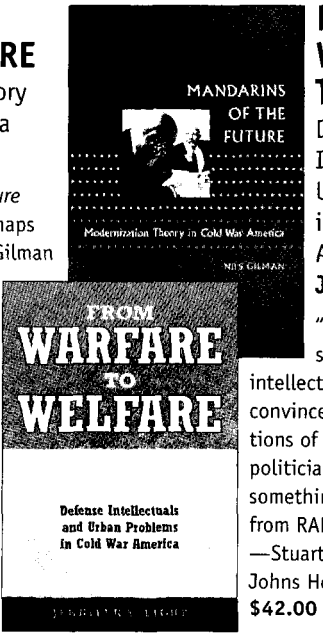

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Money Talks

Robert Rubin remembers Clintonomics.

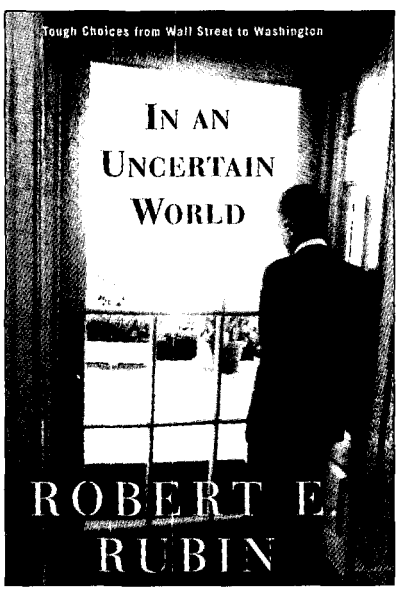
By Steven Mufson

The thought of Robert Rubin ever writing a memoir would have struck those of us who met him during his first weeks in Washington as far-fetched. In his debut luncheon with reporters and editors at *The Washington Post*, the understated former co-chairman of Goldman Sachs seemed barely able to ask for a cup of coffee without letting his young, garrulous aide Gene Sperling speak for him.

That was before federal budget battles, the Asian financial crisis, the Mexico rescue, and the roaring '90s economy turned Rubin into one of the most widely recognized U.S. Treasury secretaries ever, adorning the covers of newsweeklies and briefly (if implausibly) rumored to be a possible vice presidential candidate for Al Gore.

Now, a decade after his arrival in Washington, a more politically seasoned and somewhat less cautious Rubin has written, with the help of *Slate* editor Jacob Weisberg, a memoir of his days on Wall Street and his six and a half years in the Clinton administration.

In an Uncertain World: Tough Choices from Wall Street to Washington is no kiss-and-tell memoir, though it does have a few moments of humor and genuine tension. The philosophic core of the book is not profound, composed of Rubin's "fundamental view that nothing in life is certain and that, consequently, all decisions are about probabilities." He imagines "the mind as a virtual legal pad," where variables and probabilities are identified then subjected to a decision based on "instinct, experience and 'feel.'" This is Rubin's recurring theme throughout the book, and it helps explain how he got along so well with the number-crunching Republican Federal Reserve chairman Alan Greenspan.



In an Uncertain World: Tough Choices from Wall Street to Washington

By Robert E. Rubin and Jacob Weisberg

Random House, $35.00

But the book is illuminating, most of all for the light it sheds on America's current fiscal situation. Once again the nation finds itself with large structural deficits, growing international uncertainty, and gargantuan Social Security obligations of the Baby Boom generation looming ever closer. Mindful of Republican efforts to discredit the Clinton administration's economic policies, Rubin makes a spirited and largely persuasive defense of those policies while denouncing the "fiscally unsound" tax-cutting frenzy of the Bush administration.

Arrant Nonsense

When Clinton was elected in 1992, the federal government had little credibility on fiscal matters. I had been covering economic policy for the three previous years and "smoke and mirrors" had become an annual feature after the release of administration budget proposals. Taxes were taboo (or heavily disguised), because the first President Bush had sworn he would back "no new taxes." Spending would not be called spending. Democrats and Republicans used every conceivable trick to make it appear they were living up to the rules of the Gramm-Rudman Act—legislation that had been designed to force lawmakers to balance the books.

So when the Clinton administration released its first budget proposals, I instinctively started writing the "smoke and mirrors" story, until a senior editor came by to suggest that this time it might be different. And it was (mostly). Rubin and the rest of the Clinton team weren't saints ("a small puff of smoke and a little glint of a mirror," as one congressional budget expert described the first budget proposals), and many economic policy issues under their watch were, and are, open to legitimate debate. But even though the president's credibility in his personal life would be destroyed, the administration's credibility on economic issues grew. More importantly, record-breaking deficits disappeared, replaced by record-breaking surpluses, and the politics of scarcity ended. Once again Democ-

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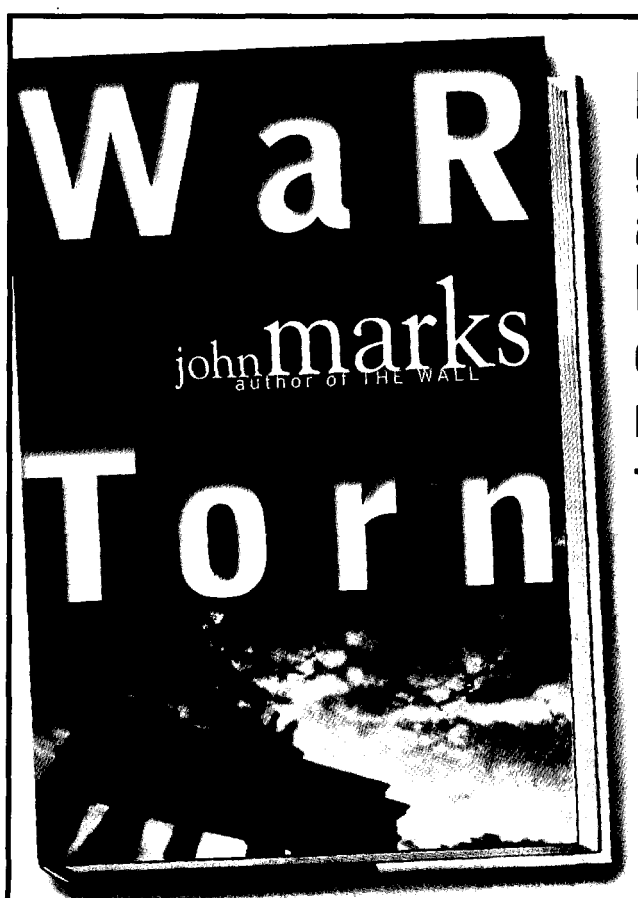
rats and Republicans could debate what government should or should not do rather than what it simply could not do.

It has become fashionable among some people to attribute the prosperity of the Clinton era to the former president's good fortune. And while Rubin's book doesn't have any startling revelations about the economic policy decisions of the Clinton presidency, it does serve as a reminder that Clinton did indeed make some tough and potentially unpopular choices.

The first was his decision in 1993 to press for a budget package aimed at reducing the mounting federal deficit. The package—a combination of modest trims in federal spending, an inching up of the tax rates on upper-income earners, and an expansion of the Earned Income Tax Credit for the working poor—passed without Republican support. With hindsight, the administration's budget plan appears prudent. It boosted confidence in Washington's fiscal responsibility and thereby helped drive interest rates lower. Liberals at the time accused Clinton of betrayal for abandoning the middle class tax cuts he had campaigned on, but those accusations seem trivial now. Conservatives at the time predicted the deal would slow the economy. It was instead followed by the longest economic expansion in American history.

Many conservative economists have since argued that interest rates had already begun falling under the first Bush administration, and that the economy's total amount of savings and investment is not affected by the federal deficit because individuals and corporations adjust their behavior. Rubin calls the idea that big long-term fiscal deficits have no effect on interest rates "arrant nonsense" and spends several pages calculating just how much of a premium can be attributed to the deficit. Republicans who argue that the growth of the late 1990s was a result of Ronald Reagan's tax cuts, Rubin quips, might as well give credit to Herbert Hoover. And to those who think that technology advances explain American success, Rubin notes that identical technologies failed to spark the same growth in Japan or Europe. Credit, he argues, must go to Clinton's budget-balancing fiscal policies, pro-trade achievements, and willingness to intervene selectively to stabilize international markets.

Rubin portrays Clinton as smart, engaged, and willing to take political risks to do what seemed right. In a fast-paced chapter about the Mexican financial crisis of 1994, Rubin recalls going to Clinton, describing the situation, and telling him that the rescue plan that Rubin and his team had devised with the IMF would be "massive, potentially unpopular, and risky." It would be criticized as "bailing out" wealthy American and European investors, Rubin predicted, and it would bring a battle with Congress, which in elections nine weeks earlier had fallen under control of the Republicans.



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White House Chief of Staff Leon Panetta, who supported the package, still told Clinton it could cost him the election in 1996. Nonetheless, Rubin says, Clinton did not hesitate to support the rescue package for Mexico. "He gained nothing politically by helping Mexico and risked much at a time when his political capital had already been greatly diminished," Rubin writes. It was, he says, a Bill Clinton "the public too seldom saw."

Keeping his distance

Rubin is charmingly candid about how he first came to the attention of Democratic Party leaders for a wholly different kind of economic acumen: political fundraising. As a senior partner and co-chairman at Goldman Sachs, he was a campaign finance rainmaker, and that gave him entrée. Rubin became Walter Mondale's New York State finance chairman in the 1984 presidential campaign. He concedes bluntly that "my place at the Mondale table came from fund-raising." In 1991, he co-hosted a series of small dinners held by a group of 15 wealthy New York business and media figures with prospective Democratic presidential candidates. One was named Bill Clinton.

But Rubin does come by his twin interests in finance and politics quite naturally. Rubin's paternal grandfather fled to the United States from Minsk, Russia. Like many Jewish immigrants he arrived penniless, but grew wealthy speculating in Florida real estate during the 1920s before losing his fortune in the land bust that followed the stock market crash of 1929. Rubin's maternal grandfather was a lawyer and real estate investor whose real passion was politics. He ran a Democratic club in Brooklyn, part of the party's machine, and was a major figure in his slice of Brooklyn.

Unlike his grandfathers, however, Rubin entered the worlds of business and politics from the top. A graduate of Harvard College and Yale Law School, he joined Goldman Sachs, one of the most respected investment banks, after becoming bored with practicing law at Cleary Gottlieb. He touches on some of the giants of Goldman Sachs, the tempestuous Gus Levy and legendary "Bunny" Lasker. And he is not too proud to recount how he lost half a million dollars of the firm's money by guessing wrong on a merger. He must not have bet wrong too often, because he rose to the top of the firm.

Robert Rubin was a good fit for the Democratic Party in the Clinton era. During those years, Democrats traded places with the pre-Reagan Republicans and became the party of fiscal responsibility. Rubin—a liberal in a business suit—wanted the government to have social programs, but he also wanted Washington to figure out how to pay for them without running huge deficits.

Rubin spent 26 years on Wall Street as a trader, but he came to Washington unburdened by the arrogance and missionary zeal many businessmen bring to government. In business and politics, both known for their rude, over-the-top ways, Rubin was distinguished by his courtesy and reserve. He writes that when he came to the nation's capital in 1993 as head of the newly created National Economic Council, he had much to learn from the more experienced political hands, even if many of them were 20 years younger than he was. But those young political hands in the White House learned much from Rubin—especially a respect for the power of financial markets.

Rubin was a good fit for the Democratic Party in the Clinton era. During those years, Democrats traded places with the pre-Reagan Republicans and became the party of fiscal responsibility, all things being relative. Rubin wanted the government to have social programs, but he wanted government to figure out how to pay for them without running huge deficits.

Clinton adviser James Carville lampooned Rubin's concern about bond markets by calling him "Nick" after Bush Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady. But Rubin was, in fact, a liberal in a business suit, concerned with "the fundamental problem of an urban underclass cut off from the mainstream of American society."

This concern for the poor led him to side with administration liberals in opposing Clinton's signing of the welfare reform bill of 1996. "I felt strongly that some people on welfare are unable to work for reasons that are beyond their control, whether psychological, physical, or simply through a lack of work skills and work habits." He says cutting off food stamps and other benefits to legal immigrants "just seemed wrong to me." Clinton eventually got some of these benefits put back, and Rubin retained his respect for his boss.

Perhaps Rubin was able to keep a favorable view of Clinton because he was not a great chum of the president. Rubin likes a full night's sleep. He returned home to New York on weekends. He tells one revealing anecdote about his relationship with his Clinton colleagues. During the early days of the administration, Vice President Al Gore suggested the Cabinet members spend a weekend at Camp David. After dinner, they sat in a circle and each person was supposed to tell something personal the others didn't know. "When my turn came, I said I didn't have anything I particularly wanted to share," Rubin recalls.

Perhaps that distance helped his

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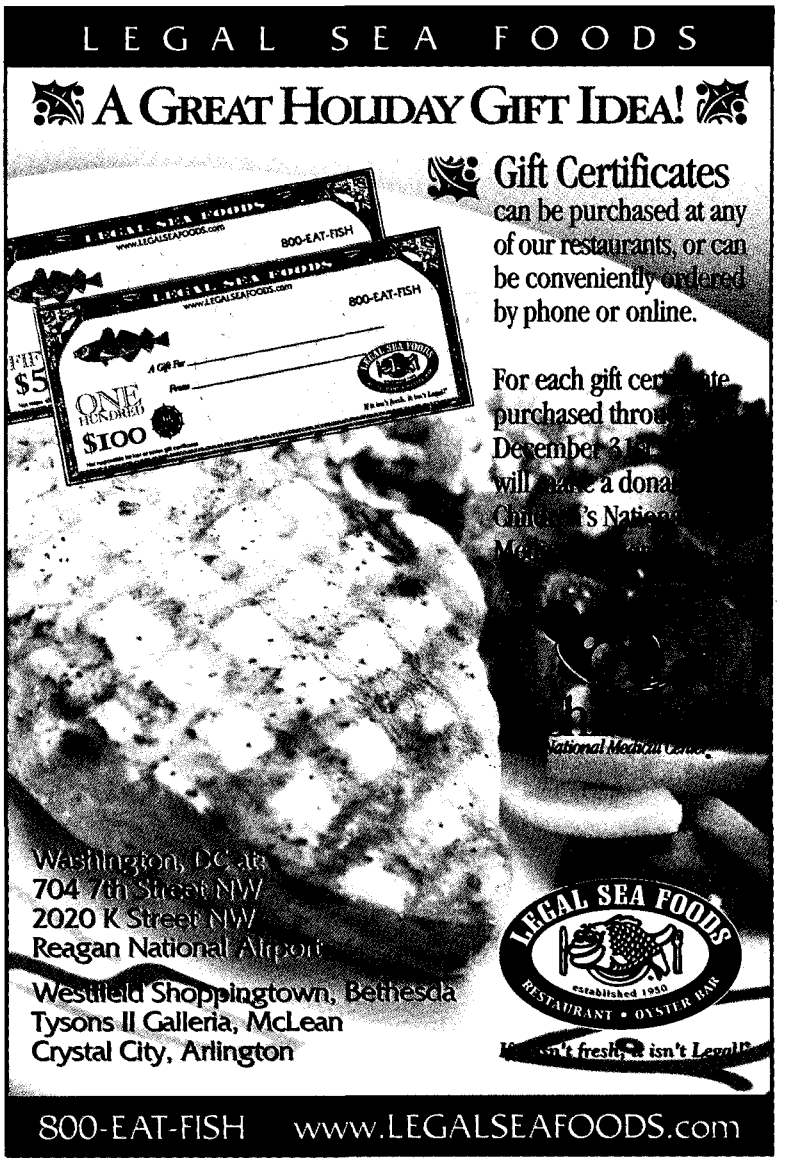
relationship with Clinton in the end. Monica Lewinsky is mentioned in the book only twice, and there is no news in either instance. Whereas many of Clinton's most devoted supporters have spoken of their bitterness and sense of betrayal about Clinton's affair, Rubin betrays none of those feelings. Indeed on the subject of Lewinsky, Rubin is relatively forgiving. He says Clinton was "remarkably focused" and that in talking to him about economic problems in Russia, for example, "you wouldn't have known he had anything else to worry about." And whereas some former Clinton aides have said Clinton could have accomplished greater things were it not for Lewinsky and the impeachment, Rubin says that wasn't true in the economic sphere. He believes that the next big economic policy issue at the time was Social Security reform, but there wasn't any appetite for such a potentially unpopular undertaking among Republicans, who controlled Congress, or among Democrats when a government surplus was in sight. "Well before the scandal, we already felt stuck," he says.



Deficit redux

If there is any bitterness in the book, Rubin reserves it for members of Congress. He spears former House Speaker Newt Gingrich for toying with the possibility of an unprecedented and potentially disastrous default on U.S. government bonds in 1995. Gingrich opposed the normally routine measure to raise the national debt ceiling unless he could attach unrelated and unacceptable items to the legislation. The debate was harsh. Ultimately Rubin found a way to pay the government's bills for a short period, and Gingrich backed down. After that fight was over, Gingrich was friendly again. But, Rubin writes, "even after a few years in Washington, I couldn't relate to the idea that you shouldn't take it personally when someone calls you a liar and a thief. The propensity to convert policy and political disagreement into personalized assault can have consequences for decision-making."

He also remains incredulous that Gingrich would use the federal government's reputation and credibility as a hostage for a political agenda. "At the time, I didn't think that this threat was serious," Rubin writes. It was, he said then and now, "unthinkable."

But in Washington politics these days, the unthinkable has become reality. To me, it is hard to conceive how any president would want to return to an era of big budget deficits. Having written about the 1990 budget battle under the first President Bush and seen the close call President Clinton had getting his budget deal through Congress, I would think that any president would want to avoid such legislative bloodshed. And yet surpluses are now gone, massive long-term deficits are back, apparently by design, and the government's reserves of credibility have been depleted once again. Replenishing them will take leadership, and time. Even in Rubin's "uncertain world," that much seems certain.

Steven Mufson is deputy editor of the Outlook section at *The Washington Post*. He covered U.S. economic policy for the *Post* from 1990 to 1993.

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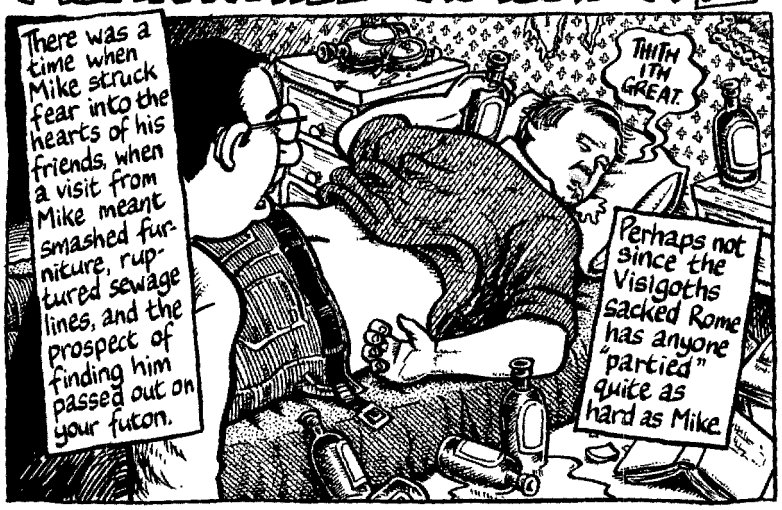
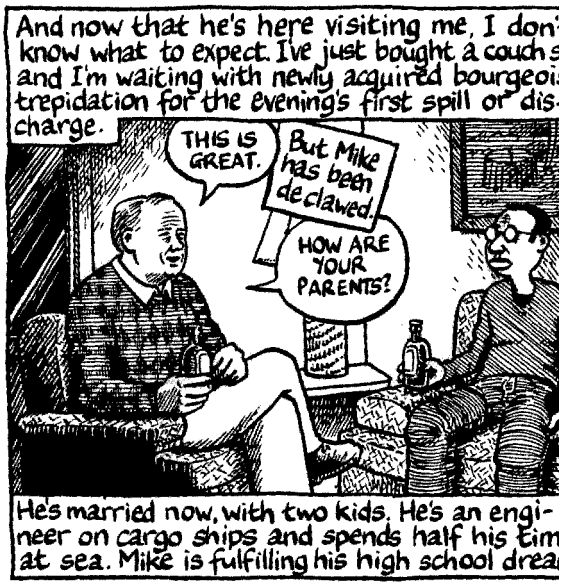
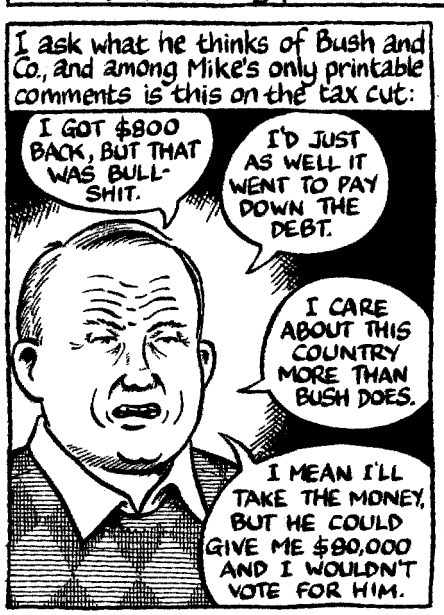
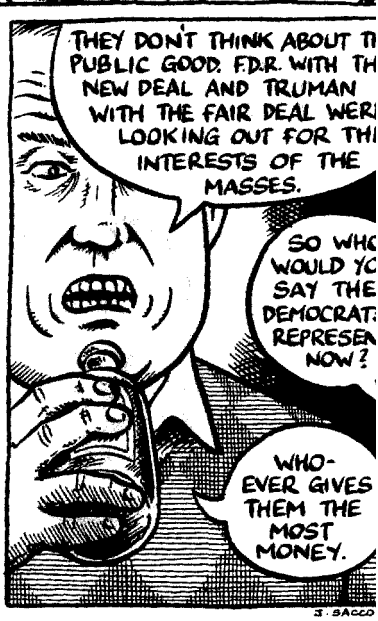
MEANWHILE in AMERICA

by Joe Sacco ©2003









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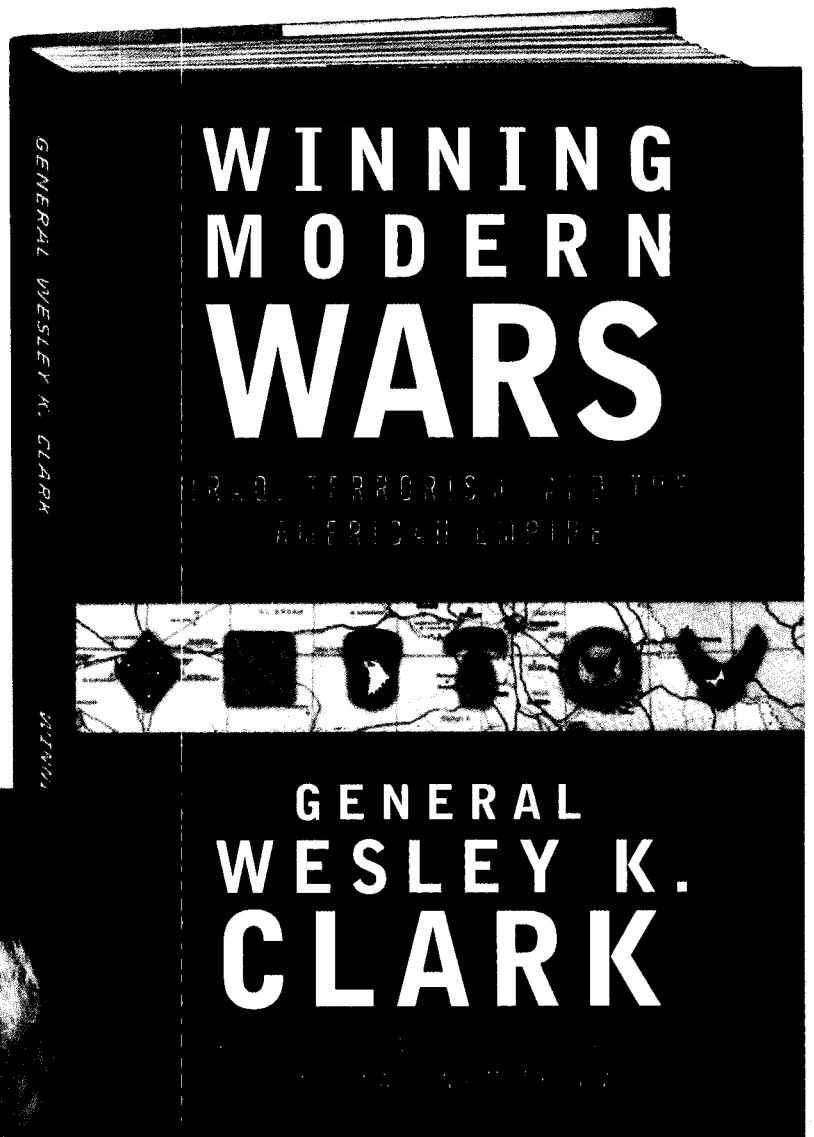
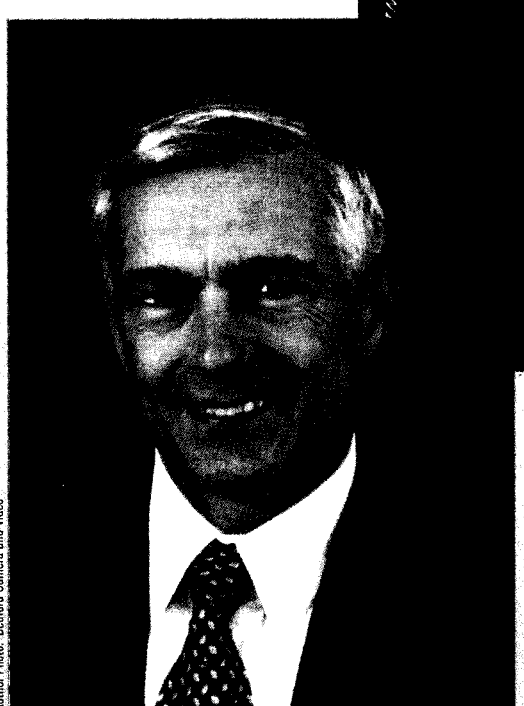


"As a military man, his insights go beyond the predictable Republican-Democrat partisan dialogue. It's a valuable perspective no matter which candidate you vote for."
—*Bruce Nussbaum, *BusinessWeek*



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